commonweal

Abigail McCarthy
PRAYER IN D.C.

The Editors
PRAYER IN SCHOOLS

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DEAR BISHOPS

AN OPEN LETTER ON WAR & PEACE

DAVID J. O'BRIEN

ALSO: *WESTERBECK ON SCREEN CHARLES A. BRADY ON WOOLF, CARROLL, & JOYCE ALFRED PRIORI ON PINHEAD ANGELS, DAVID R. CARLIN, JR. ON THE SAFETY NET METAPHOR*

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Correspondence

Easter recollection

Syracuse, N.Y.

To the Editors: Peter Skarga's Easter recollection, "Babcia" [Apr. 9], was profoundly moving. How much it said in small compass!

Can we have more from him?

HUSTON SMITH

Holy chills

Syracuse, N.Y.

To the Editors: The Easter recollection "Babcia" [Apr. 9], by Peter Skarga, made the holy chills run up and down my spine. It also left me with twinges of regret, and perhaps some guilt, for my own substitution of intellectual sophistication for profound simplicity. What more need be said? It is a story for the heart, not for hermeneutics. As the author wrote, if you have to explain a symbol it is not a symbol.

KENDRA SMITH

Troubled conscience

St. Louis, Mo.

To the Editors: Peter Skarga's Easter Recollection of his "Babcia" [Apr. 9] brought back fond memories of growing up in an ethnic neighborhood. But it troubles the conscience too, since so many grandmothers still live there, forgotten "amidst the boarded-up shops, the burned-out houses."

The original Peter Skarga was a Jesuit preacher famous in Polish history for his eloquence. The pseudonym was well chosen.

(REV.) RONALD MODRAS

World order

Berkeley, Calif.

To the Editors: Congratulations to Bishop Roger Mahony! And thanks to you for publishing his pastoral on peace advocacy [Mar. 12]. Many share his conviction that "the present arms policy of the United States . . . must be effectively challenged and changed." Thirty-one of us, including clerics, seminarians, and other theology students, were arrested on March 1 for briefly blockading two entrances to the Lawrence Livermore Lab, thirty-five miles east of Oakland, in protest against the design and development of nuclear weapons there. A month earlier 170 protesters were taken into custody for the same sort of civil disobedience.

However, as the Misches have been pointing out, the peace movement must go beyond denunciation of the arms race (important as that remains) to the annunciation of alternatives. The crucial issue here is the basic human need for security in a world made insecure by unregulated competition among sovereign states over balance of payments and scarce resources as well as balance (or superiority) of weapons. A global system is necessary in which national sovereignty is subordinated to international security in key military, monetary, and resource matters. Nations would then be free to promote more vigorously the well-being of their own people. (See Gerald and Patricia Mische, *Toward A Human World Order.*)

The peace movement as a whole has failed to address this basic human and political need. We have insisted (rightly) that the escalation of the arms race makes us less secure, and that its reversal will lessen the danger and make more resources available to deal with hunger and other problems. But unless we also propose more positive structural alternatives, along the lines of work which has been underway for some time now on world order institutions, we run the risk of continuing to polarize our constituencies into "hawks" and "doves," and of not reaching the frightened middle. So it seems time for the peace movement to enlist the services of the world order movement, and for the latter to clamor for the public attention and support it deserves.

Bishop Mahony may have in mind this deficiency of the peace movement when he implies the need for "new institutions that could further delimit the possibilities of war." As he and his people help one another in the months ahead to find new approaches to becoming a church of peace advocacy I hope they (and all of us) will look to the world order movement for suggestions.

(REV.) NEIL L. DOHERTY, S.J.
Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley

World politics

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: In Bishop Roger Mahony's peace message [Mar. 12] he mentions political action, but he looks only toward political action within the United States. That is a beginning, but only a beginning, for any lasting peace will require international cooperation, which means international political action.

Peace will not come through one-sided disarmament; neither will it come through one-sided political action. It is time to get back to basics. The lesson of history is that peace requires law, whether it be the law of tribal chieftains or of modern democracies. And laws require politics, of one sort or another.

So world peace means world political action; practical, cooperative action. Tough? Of course; but the harsh fact is that there is no other way.

There is no longer any need to list the horrors of war. We know them. The point now is how to achieve world political procedures to banish war. We still have John XXIII's statement on peace, so recently reaffirmed by John Paul II, but it, like any other ad hoc outline, needs supplementation for later application, that is, for today. The supplementa-

(Continued on page 318)

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IS SCHOOL PRAYER THE ANSWER?

TRAVELERS FROM ABROAD have never failed to note, sometimes with pleasure, sometimes with astonishment, the extent to which the United States is a singularly religious nation. For a long time, the U.S. was overwhelmingly Protestant. Today it remains overwhelmingly Christian. At the same time, it promises nothing less than the fullest citizenship and freedom of conscience to those of *every* religious belief and to those of no religious belief at all. In practice, it has not always been easy to reconcile the reality of a religiously infused culture with the commitment to equal respect for differing beliefs. That reconciliation was not so pressing as long as many minorities were concentrated in regional or ethnic enclaves where they could establish a dominant cultural tone, just as a nonsectarian Protestantism was wont to do at the national level. But time, mobility, and the addition of more strands of belief — and of non-belief, too — eroded that *modus vivendi*. The search for an honest pluralism has continued.

One of the products of that search was the Supreme Court's 1962 ruling that school-sponsored prayers in public classrooms violated the First Amendment to the Constitution. That ruling has never sat well with a large proportion of the public. It has provoked sporadic local defiance and often gone quietly unobserved. It has inspired a good many lamentations about the decline of America. And it has created ample opportunities for political demagoguery about "banning God from the schools." Nonetheless, the Court's ruling has always struck us as a sound reading of constitutional principles in today's circumstances, one that protected the rights of parents and children, kept government from a dangerous sort of religious entanglement, and preserved the religious authenticity of prayer.

Now President Reagan is offering a constitutional amendment authorizing official but voluntary prayer in the public schools. He thinks the 1962 ruling should be reversed, but he doesn't explain why. Prayer, said the president at a cememony on May 6, has always sustained Americans in crisis. Faith in God, he said, is a source of our strength as a nation. That may well be true, but it is still no reason why faith and prayer must be officially institutionalized in the public schools. As for the innumerable objections to such official prayers, the president brushed them aside. "No one will ever convince me that a moment of voluntary prayer will harm a child or threaten a school or state." Perhaps no one will ever convince the president, not even with a suitable anecdote; but his incapacity to be convinced is hardly evidence that his proposal does not involve potential harms — to children, to social peace, and to religion itself.

Others are clearer than the president. They believe that reinstituting prayers in public schools will lend an official legitimation to belief in God, if not even to Christianity, and that this legitimation, in turn, will help reverse what they perceive to be a growing tide of disbelief and immorality. They see prayer in public

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classrooms as a symbolic way of "taking back" those classrooms from a secular humanist enemy. In part, their worries about moral and religious decline are valid; in part, their fears about "secular humanism" and "atheistic indoctrination" are the products of overheated imaginations. But prayer in public schools is not the solution they think it is. Either those prayers will be doctrinally specific, and offensive to those of differing beliefs, or they will be empty, and offensive to those of any strong beliefs. In either case, official prayers, however arranged so as to be "voluntary," are more apt to discredit religious faith and the morality it sustains than to foster respect for them. If nothing else, supporters of prayers in public schools should take heed of the example of Great Britain, where such a longstanding institutional ritual has done nothing to reinvigorate religion, to reinforce morality, or even (note carefully!) to prevent the inroads of socialism.

To state the case against prayers in public schools, one need not hold with the doctrinaire argument that insists religious people must park all their beliefs at the door the moment they enter governmental territory. In an age when government

THE SAFETY NET

SEEING BENEATH IT

PRACTICED OBSERVERS of politics, sensible fellows that they are, believe that if you want to understand what's really going on in the mind of a politician, pay attention to what he does, not what he says. Actions speak louder than words. As a practicing politician, I agree — with one important reservation. There's one category of political speech, I think, in which the opposite is true, in which words speak louder than actions. I'm referring to political metaphors — expressions such as "ship of state," "crusade against crime," and "war on poverty."

The full significance of a political metaphor doesn't lie on its surface, revealing itself to every casual observer. It's not the homely tip of the iceberg that works so magically on us, but its vast and mysterious underwater portion. If you know a politician's favorite metaphors and deduce some of their unstated implications — their underwater parts — you're well on the way to knowing his worldview. In fact, you'll probably know more of his worldview than he does himself, since in nine cases out of ten he won't be aware of the profound subconscious beliefs and values the metaphor has touched in him. Likewise, because of this subconscious appeal, political metaphors are especially effective tools of persuasion. Get a man to adopt a metaphor and he's on the road, aware of it or not, to accepting implications he might well have resisted.

The most fascinating example to come along in many a day is that favorite of the Reagan administration — the "social safety net." Safety nets in the literal sense, of course, are found in circuses, where they're intended to catch performers who slip and fall while engaged in the risky business of negotiating high wires and trapezes. Think for a moment about the view of government, society, and human nature implied by this metaphor.

1. In comparing the beneficiary of any of the numerous social welfare programs referred to by "safety net" label with someone who has slipped from the high wire of trapeze, the metaphor compares the rest of us with performers who at present happen to be maintaining our balance but might — for this is in the very nature of aerial acts and adds greatly to their excitement — lose it at any moment. It suggests that the normal state for a nonrecipient of welfare assistance should be one not of economic security but of economic risk.

The ideal citizen, it follows, must be the entrepreneur who is constantly risking capital in one new venture after another. By contrast, someone like the union man, who's interested in job security and a pension, is far from ideal. And so is the corporate bureaucrat, who wants to move steadily and securely up the ladder, while building up his tax-sheltered annuity.

2. The metaphor also implies that the condition of welfare dependency should be quite temporary. Aerialists who fall, after all, don't take an afternoon's snooze in the net. No, they bounce right off, and before the audience can catch its breath they're ascending the ladder for one more try.

That some people might be forced out of action permanently, that they either no longer have what it takes to climb the ladder one more time or never had the talent for high wire acrobatics in the first place — such possibilities are not contemplated by the metaphor. It's a safety net, remember, not a hammock.

3. In circuses there's a great distance separating the safety net from the performers up above, and there's never any doubt as to who's up and who's down. The metaphor implies there should be equally clear marks distinguishing welfare beneficiaries from everybody else.

The easiest way to do this, of course, is to require recipients to wear uniforms or badges. But since this strategy (even if the Nazis hadn't given it a bad name) won't do in a society like ours, a second-best solution will have to be resorted to: we can be especially stingy with welfare benefits. That way recipients will be forced to adopt a spare and impoverished life style, and anyone with halfway decent eyesight will be able to spot them a hundred yards off.

This list of implications can go on and on. The above sample should show you what I mean.

DAVID R. CARLIN, JR.

(David R. Carlin, Jr., is a senator in the Rhode Island state legislature.)

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touches on almost every aspect of life, that formula is one for the permanent parking of religious beliefs altogether. How religious beliefs and symbols can find a place in public life consonant with pluralism remains a complex question. What is relatively simple, however, is that giving school districts the power to endorse prayers, requiring school teachers to proclaim them, and asking school children to join in — voluntarily or not — is an exercise certain to do injury to the deepest conscience of numerous citizens. One hopes that conservatives in particular, since they have the administration's ear, will be clear on this point. Those who have worried about the government's inserting itself between parent and child should recognize here a blatant example of this trend. Those who have raised questions about "value-free" sex education in the classrooms ought immediately to perceive the far more dubious enterprise of dogma-free prayer.

The president's school-prayer amendment comes at a bad time — at least for getting any serious scrutiny and debate. The administration has put a proposal before the world on reducing nuclear arms. It continues to push a distinctive economic policy that promises either redemption or ruin, depending upon your point of view. Its foreign policy still must meet the challenges of Central America, the Middle East, Poland — and now the Falklands. These are the issues on which its performances should be judged in the coming congressional elections. And in terms of constitutional amendments, the Hatch amendment, dealing with the crucial issue of unborn human life, deserves far greater attention than prayer in schools. It would be a shame for a school-prayer amendment, like the recent tuition tax-credit proposal, to serve only as a political IOU to a religious constituency, a debt that may prove ultimately uncollectible but meanwhile be eminently distracting from the pressing issues of the hour.

THE AMERICAN WAY?

Norman Lear is to politics pretty much what Jerry Falwell is to theology. They are both television preachers with a natural capacity for packaging the pieties of their separate worlds. Lear, in fact, is far and away the more successful "prime-time preacher" of the two of them; perhaps it was inevitable that he would square off against upstart Falwell. In any case, he has organized "People for the American Way," a group dedicated to using the media to counter the influence of the new religious right.

Lear spoke about this effort not long ago at a luncheon sponsored by the National Council of Churches' Information Committee, and he didn't do a very good job. He was amiable, to be sure, but in good liberal fashion he eschewed challenging the substance of the religious right's platform and complained, instead, about the *way* that Falwell and Company went about their business. Said Lear: the right employes emotion and fear to manipulate people. Yet by the end of his address, Lear was himself arguing in favor of a "visceral" appeal to people in defense of all the good causes (of course). People are too beset with their everyday lives, he explained, to deal with complexity. The message had to be delivered suitably coated with emotion and entertainment.

This was probably said in defense of his "I Love Liberty" television extravaganza, a kind of "Let Poland Be Poland" for the First Amendment. But it may also explain the unfortunate character of People for the American Way's recent advertizing. Those advertisement are aimed at "the moral majoritarians," a group that is never identified but is held accountable for the most outrageous examples of book-burning and even found guilty of wanting to establish a dictatorship in America. The ads combine tabloid-style headlines and a few shocking examples or quotations with a list of vague charges that might apply to a much wider group of Americans. It is a technique that a clever copywriter could use against the woman's movement or the nuclear disarmament movement. It is, in fact, very much like the technique that the religious right employs against "secular humanists" or "atheistic liberals." The only excuse for this sort of thing is the old line about fighting "fire with fire," and we don't think that's good enough. Some of the fair-minded people that Lear has signed onto his Board of Advisors — Theodore Hesburgh, Martin Marty, Marc H. Tanenbaum, and others — ought to raise objections.

Of several minds: *Abigail McCarthy*

PRAYER & PEOPLE

MORE CONGRESSMEN ARE PRAYING THAN PARTYING

THE DELEGATE from United States Samoa — new to the House of Representatives — was humorously describing his discoveries. Life for a congressman was not full of the wild parties he had read about in the sensational revelations of Rita Jenrette, wife of the ill-fated former congressman. The first invitation he himself had received was to a prayer breakfast! It is, in truth, a little reported fact but on any given day here in the nation's capital there are probably as many congressmen meeting in prayer groups as there are partying. And not all of them are members of the New Right or inspired by the Moral Majority.

One such prayer group of long standing includes liberal Republican Senator Mark Hatfield, Senator Lawton Chiles, a Democrat, Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, also a Democrat, and Senator Pete Domenici, a Republican. The first three are Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist respectively. Senator Domenici is a Catholic. These men are not eccentrics of the right and new on the scene but men of some stature in the Senate and respected

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by both their peers and the press. Why do they belong to a prayer group?

"Historically," says Senator Hatfield, "we have the example of the people of the apostolic church living under the extraordinary strains of beginnings and of persecution. Their community of prayer was the source of their remarkable vitality and strength. Association with others in a common effort is strengthening. Two are stronger than one. If one falls, the other can help him up."

He adds, "We live in an age of disconnectedness. Sociologists talk about the loss of community as a common factor in our American culture. The prayer group restores community. It is a place where I can be vulnerable, dependent, open. As a unit of community, it not only fills my need but that of society. The multiplying of prayer groups is in part, a response to this need."

"I see a great difference between now and ten or twenty years ago. As the tension and anxiety with which we live mounts, as we have a greater perception of living on the edge of the abyss of nuclear holocaust, we have a greater need to live in the light of the ultimate truth. We need to know where we are, who we are, to acknowledge the sovereignty of God, to know that we are spiritual as well as physical beings."

In the Washington area, at least, the prayer group is a Protestant phenomenon, in that most of the groups develop out of Protestant congregations or in connection with Protestant movements like the Campus Crusade. Yet I have a significant number of Jewish friends who gather in similar groups to reflect on the scriptures, and many Catholics are members of the groups originally of Protestant origin. It is roughly estimated that of the members of more than fifty groups associated with a suburban Protestant church at least half are Catholics who live in the neighborhood.

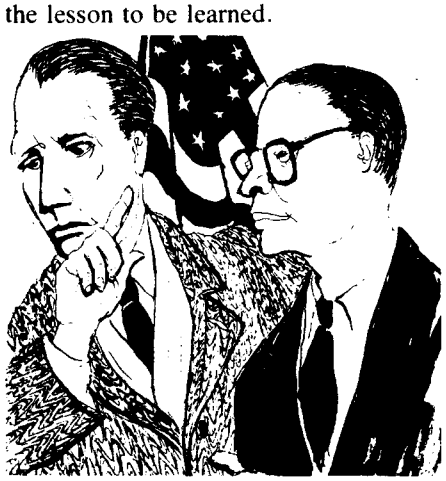
At worst these groups can be centers of self-righteousness and narrow literal interpretations of the Bible. "If I had wanted dogma I would have stayed where I was," said a former Catholic who sampled one of these. At best, however, they embody a serious common effort to confront the tasks of every day in the light of the Gospel. "I think of myself as a good Catholic," said a Senate wife who belongs to a prayer group, "and I get spiritual sustenance from Mass and the sacraments, but very little of what I hear on Sunday helps me to live the life I must lead."

The need is, in Mark Hatfield's words, to know "where we are between Sundays": "We are the church dispersed in the world; in prayer groups we affirm our Christian identity across denominational lines."

So far the great number of prayer groups and Bible study groups are more a demonstration of a need than anything else. "The conservatives have been much quicker to sense the need and to try to fill it than have the mainline churches," admits one Protestant pastor. "Unfortunately most of the groups hold themselves aloof from the world and tend to sit in judgment. I think the same thing could probably be said of some Catholic charismatic groups." Groups may provide community but do not overflow in charity — as yet.

How is the thirst for a true spirituality, a common spirituality, to be authentically met? To answer that question institutes and centers of spirituality have sprung up around the country.

At the best of these there is an effort to draw from the Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, and Jewish experience. Spirituality is approached as the deepest reality in the life of persons and psychology, anthropology, sociology, and the history of religion as resources which can contribute to it. Differences are explored for the lesson to be learned.



For example, the Protestant starts existentially and not from a religious principle, wrote Kilian McDonnell, OSB, for an ecumenical conference on spiritual life some years ago. In consequence he is equipped "to hear more readily God speaking with the voice of the secular world. He is less apt to identify the sacred with the ecclesiastical, and he is less inclined to dismiss the purely secular as without religious value . . . is readier to meet and greet the Spirit where he moves and manifests himself . . . the Catholic ties the Spirit to sacred places, sacred persons, and sacred actions." It is God in the secular world that a Catholic finds in an ecumenical prayer group. He should know that what he can bring to it is his traditional sense of the sacred and thus prevent his group from falling into a piety which is not much more than a humanism expressed in a biblical vocabulary.

People praying today do so in a different environment than in the past, said John Oliver Nelson, director of Kirkridge, the Presbyterian retreat center, at the same conference. "We face a new universe, a new individual, a new statement of the Gospel, new corporateness, new liberty of opinion and action." The new individualism — despair and meaninglessness are the problems of many an individual today, for example — and "what am I as a *person?*" is an innate query for most people. The new corporateness—"We are closer by television to multitudes of people than most of our ancestors were to anyone outside their household . . . millions of people . . . have real identification with lodge, congregation, service club, fraternity or sorority, political grouping, P.T.A., credit union, labor organization, management, etc." The associations may be shallow but they demand energy and condition thought and action. Yet prayer life and liturgy often presuppose only incorporation in the parish—often the most tenuous of identifications—and the family.

The considerations are many, but the application should be simple: a spiritual life in common which enables persons to cope with each day as believers. Leaders seek it; so do the people.

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

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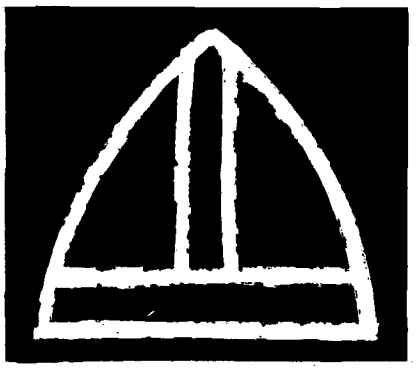

TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAR & PEACE

An open letter to the bishops

DAVID J. O'BRIEN

DEAR BISHOPS:

I hope you will excuse the impertinence of some more unsolicited advice. In the course of preparing a pastoral letter on peace, I'm sure you are getting a lot of it. Pacifists ask you "what would Jesus do?" and seem pretty sure they know the answer. Government officials warn that great international issues are at stake, and they seem pretty sure they know better than you how to deal with them. Good men in the military request that you remember the existence of so many decent officers, some of them Holy Cross and Notre Dame graduates. The gentle radicals ask you to reflect on the fate of the poor, the refugees, the victims of war; the thoughtful moderates call attention to the victims of tyranny and recall memories of sacrifices made in other wars so that we could be free.

Within your committee you have men absolutely convinced of the immorality of nuclear weapons, so that it is a sin to possess them, and men equally convinced that only these weapons preserve what peace that we have. Both sides warn against cowardly compromise, of the Gospel or of human freedom. As churchmen, you may worry that either way you will have another *Humanae Vitae* on your hands. If you come down pacifist, more or less, and choose the path of "prophetic witness," you may lost the respect and allegiance of millions who disagree, and not all of them will be simply selfish, or super-patriotic. If you come down moderate, allowing deterrence and prayerfully awaiting negotiated disarmament, you will lose fewer persons, but they will be among your most dedicated, hard-working followers.

I for one hope that you will not choose, and that you will refuse to choose as a matter of principle. You do not represent some other-worldly sect, with no responsibility but to proclaim your special truth and hurl down thunderbolts at sinful men and women. Nor do you represent some branch of civil religion, responsible and domesticated, recognizing the way things are and accepting choices defined by the powerful. You are Roman Catholic bishops, leaders of that church which claims above all to be the living presence of Christ in the world. Like him, you refuse either to withdraw or surrender to the world. He did not gather a few followers and flee to the mountains to publish brochures denouncing those who remained behind. Neither did Jesus tell people to go along and get along. He did not suggest that, after responding to his message, they could go back to business as usual, that discipleship would carry no price. He certainly did not say that there were no options other than those available at the time. He endorsed neither hypocritical Jewish lackeys of the Roman regime nor zealous Jewish revolutionaries. Instead he said some fairly clear things: that people should love God and one another, and practice some fairly simple virtues of poverty of spirit, meekness, patience, and humility; that they should hunger and thirst after justice and be peacemakers. Not a bad set of guidelines for your committee.

The problem you face is historical. Our church long upheld the just war theory, for many good reasons and some very bad ones. At Vatican II the Holy Spirit, through a few remarkable individuals, persuaded the bishops to admit that something more was needed, an entirely new attitude toward war. So they praised conscientious objection and stated unequivocally that acts of war aimed at indiscriminate destruction were wrong, sinful. You American bishops fought to gain conciliar praise for Christian soldiers and endorsement of the right of national self-defense, allowing the possession, if not the use, of nuclear weapons. Back home, however, Vietnam forced your hand as some Catholics began to practice pacifism, to claim conscientious-objector status, and to condemn indiscriminate destruction and asked you to do the same. Eventually you did, arguing that the war could not be justified in terms of the traditional categories of the just war. But the Pandora's box could not be closed, for the nukes were still there; so were many Catholic pacifists, and so were the Vatican II statements and a growing body of papal pronouncements, fuzzy on specifics but filled with passionate urgency.

DAVID J. O'BRIEN *teaches history at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts.*

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You were not immune. In 1979, you faced SALT II. Speaking on your behalf, Cardinal Krol supported the treaty before the Senate, but warned that if it did not turn out to be a step toward significant arms reduction, you, the bishops, would be froced to reevaluate your toleration of current deterrence strategies. Well, SALT II was withdrawn, the arms race has accelerated, and here you are, reevaluating.

In recent months a growing number of bishops have joined Pax Christi and have spoken out against the arms race in pastoral letters ranging from explicitly pacifist statements through carefully phrased arguments for changes in public policy to messages deploring the dangers but urging patient acceptance of the need to maintain arms parity and prayer that peace will become possible. The last bishops' meeting in November, 1981, was inspiring as bishop after bishop rose to express deep concern and to urge the body to address this most pressing of issues. And so your committee, including among its members: Bishop Gumbleton, supporting an evangelical pacifism that would call the nation to a radical conversion from our reliance on weapons, Archbishop Joseph Bernardin, the chairman, looking for carefully phrased teaching which will speak to practical issues of public policy, Bishop John O'Connor, Vicar General for the Military Ordinariate, hoping to publicize the moderate side of church teaching, while the church prays and its members fulfill their civic responsibilities. Looking at the range of your committee's expressed views, one thinks of Franklin Roosevelt locking the leaders of mutually exclusive factions in a room, telling them to come up with something all could support. And they didn't have to ask, "What would Jesus do?"

I want to suggest that you should not choose one of these positions, nor should you compromise the differences. Rather, I think you should do three things. First, you should specify the range of agreement that in fact exists; second, you should clarify the differences present within the church; and third, you should develop pastoral programs that will deepen, if not broaden, the agreement, encourage conversation about the differences, and promote peacemaking at all levels of the Catholic community.

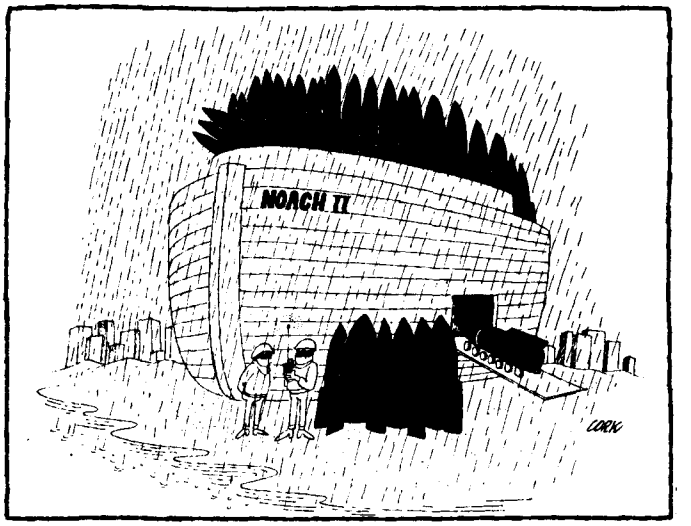
1. Areas of agreement

FOR ALL THE HEAT of current debate, there is a remarkable range of agreement among bishops and, I suspect, among Catholics. There are to be no more crusades, no holy wars, for example, and almost no one endorses the old simplistic nationalism, at least publicly. We should remember that less than two decades ago the nation's most prominent bishop was quoting Decatur's "My Country, Right or Wrong" and Archbishop Robert Lucey was berating critics of his friend Lyndon Johnson. Such actions would be (almost) unthinkable today. Everyone recognizes that the church must be the church, not the handmaid of the state. Moreover, all agree that pacifism is a legitimate Christian option (a major development in Catholic teaching) and that the church is always biased on the side of peace, what scholars call "contingent pacifism." Even the most militant of just-war theorists agrees that war must always be a last resort and is always, in the deepest sense, tragic. That is no small thing; all of us would be more comfortable if we thought that nuclear strategists really believed war was the ultimate tragedy.

There is even more precise agreement than that. There is a consensus that the use of nuclear weapons, to the extent that they are indiscriminate in their effect, is never allowable. Scientists of all sorts insist that such weapons are not, in fact, controllable, even when aimed "surgically" at military rather than civilian sites. If they are right, the weapons cannot be used, and those who argue the contrary have, fortunately, little voice in today's church. Indeed, the present administration's determination to pursue a version of nuclear parity that seems to resemble the old superiority, its apparent willingness to use nuclear bargaining chips in international diplomacy, and reckless talk of acceptable limits of destruction seem to have triggered the current wave of episcopal concern. If nothing else, such actions forced Catholic leaders to recall their long hidden agreement that not only must the church condemn the use and threatened use of nuclear weapons but, at best, it can tolerate their possession only in the context of a firm commitment to peace and a clear policy aimed at their control and eventual elimination.

Given that agreement several others things follow. It is morally dangerous in the extreme, then, to possess such weapons. Church leaders must regularly and persistently remind us of the moral danger involved. Furthermore, all of us who pay taxes, vote, and accept citizenship share responsibility for the existence of those weapons and for decisions regarding their use, in war or diplomacy, and we thus share in the moral dangers involved. In short, Catholics agree that this is the central moral issue of American citizenship.

Given the evil involved, and the complicity all share, there is another point of agreement. Each and every Catholic has a moral responsibility to work for the elimination of the danger and of the conditions which give rise to it. The general sources of those conditions lie in such problems as nationalism, ideological rigidity, economic conflict, and suppression of human rights — in all quarters of the globe — so that the



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obligation extends to active efforts to build a world of justice in which conflicts can be peacefully resolved. Whatever differences there may be regarding geopolitics and nuclear strategy, all agree that justice is the way to peace. It is this positive, active thrust which dominates Vatican statements on peace. This is simply to say that all Christians, whether pacifists or realists, must be peacemakers. Peacemaking is a personal responsibility to be peaceful, as we have always known, but it is also a political task, which, for reasons on which we agree, is a moral imperative of the highest priority.

ACCORDINGLY, I want to argue that the heart of our agreement as Roman Catholic Christians is that we are a peace church about the work of peacemaking — not a pacifist church in any doctrinaire sense, and certainly not a war-making church, but a peacemaking church with heavy obligations in both our private and public lives. I insist on the words private and public as constitutive of our peacemaking consensus. Sometimes pacifists sound like they refer only to the private world of conscience, community, and church: by being private peacemakers we can avoid complicity in evil and give public witness to the Gospel. On the other hand, stubborn just warriors also radically divide public and private life: the church, if it likes, can pray and study, but it has no significant public role. Both positions reflect a separation of private and public life which is impossible. Because we all have a conscience, and because we are all involved, we would do better to ask ourselves and one another whether, in pursuing private virtue and religious integrity, we ignore the claims of the victims of present or pending violence and injustice or, on the other hand, whether by pursuing public power and responsibility, we ignore the claims of conscience. Few of us in any camp will be altogether pleased with our answer.

A ringing proclamation of peacemaking is not a soft compromise between pacifism and just war, Gumbleton and O'Connor. Quite the contrary. It is theologically sound, pastorally appropriate, and politically significant. It is theologically sound because, while Christians have the resources to name the evil — war and weapons — and while they have a positive imperative to overcome evil with good — peacemaking — they have no special revelation about how this is to be done. They have norms which limit the options: Christians cannot destroy a nation to save it, and they have reason to resist a peace achieved through the unilateral use of superior force. But they don't, as Christians, know which particular peace program is going to work. Unilateral disarmament is no more clearly the way to peace than is peace through strength or peace through world law. Such choices involve political, social, economic, even psychological judgments into which Christians may have some insights but for which they have no special competence.

Peacemaking is pastorally appropriate as well, for in the context of shared faith, it sets the boundaries of discussion, but leaves personal and political decisions to the judgment of the Christian people. You bishops, as pastors and teachers, are required to state clearly the belief of the community, to set forth the range of agreement which exists, to speak the truth about the world as you see it, and to insist that individual Catholics and all communities and institutions take action. You must establish modes of discourse which will help people to decide intelligently on appropriate forms of action; you must assist in building communities which empower people to act, support them in their daily lives and call them to account. It would be contrary to your pastoral role to prescribe the forms of action which are appropriate, either for individuals or for publics. It is good and proper, after all, to warn of the moral dangers of current deterrence strategies; it is at least equally important to help citizens to discover, win support for, and implement strategies that have a chance of building justice and making peace possible. The church finds it all too easy to warn of dangers and call people away from the sins of the world; yet it is only in the world that ways can be found to make peace. Doing so is the appropriate task of the laity, who should find in the church resources of faith, renewal of hope, and loving support which enables them to take on those responsibilities.

Finally, peacemaking might be politically powerful, because our public life is dying for lack of peacemaking voice, peacemaking persons and peacemaking institutions. Governments spend trillions for war, but almost nothing on peace. Few corporations seem to do business in ways which build friendship and mutual understanding. Men and women work at careers with energy and imagination, pushing aside their worries that their work contributes to war rather than peace, because, among other things, peacemaking doesn't pay even enough to allow for normal family life. Asking all these people in all these places to be pacifist is a bit much; to encourage them to proceed in an unconscious and self-serving surrender to the status quo is simply unChristian. To suggest that all of us together might ask how we are being peacemakers in our various works, including religious works, might be a little more appropriate.

2. Areas of disagreement

THE CENTRAL DIVISIONS in the church on the peace issue are natural and probably permanent. Short of the Kingdom of God, they all arise from the question that has always plagued people with ideals, or ideas, when they confront the practical order: what is to be done? Given the existence of weapons, of nation states, and of many injustices, what are we to do? It is a personal question: how am I as a Christian to relate to this society? Shall I pay taxes or not, serve in the military or not, join a vigil at the church or not? Where will I work? How shall I vote? To whom shall I contribute money? It is also a pastoral question: how do we as a community help one another face and resolve these questions? What kind of witness should our community give, together and individually, in the wider society? How do we worship, pray and care for each other in the midst of war and injustice? It is also a public question: how do we, as an organized body, the church, deal with other publics and with our shared institutions at this time in history?

Some think that theological research may help resolve dif-

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ferences over scripture and the church, or that social and political research may lead to common political perceptions and strategies. I am skeptical. Differences over Christ and his peacemaking message have been present at least since Constantine, and those who would throw out fifteen centuries probably have not thought through the implications of choosing to be a small community of believers awaiting the second coming or asked who would pay the price of such a choice. Similarly, I gather that we Catholics had our fill of ecclesiological consensus after Vatican I and are learning now to live with some degree of variety based on differing experiences of faith and life. I prefer to keep it that way and doubt that any brilliant ecclesiologist is going to provide a "model" of the church which will command universal assent. Might we make more progress if we paid attention to serious political, scientific, and economic research? Even there, I suspect we would gain more in clarifying our choices than in resolving our differences. In short, I doubt there are any single answers to the question: "what is to be done?"

So, what do we do with the disagreements? My suggestion is that we talk about them.

It seems to me that the three poles of your committee need each other, and so do the communities they represent in the church. So daring, for example, are pacifists' ideas, and so dramatically personal is their commitment, that they sometimes come to believe they have the answer and are called to teach and instruct the rest of the church. It is very healthy for them to occasionally meet a sincere, committed Christian who actually works for the government, or even for the church. They learn that they need a different language even to converse with such people, and, as they adopt a different language they find themselves facing problems they had not considered. During the Vietnam war, for example, when many peace leaders wanted not only to be right but also to be effective, they found themselves using new languages — just-war language with bishops, the language of constitutional procedure, national ideals, and national interest with wider publics. And they found new problems: the appropriate use of the inescapable power that America possessed, for example; or the undeniable brutality of Vietnamese and Cambodian governments. Many pacifists began to sound like realists, slightly to the left still, but forced to ask policy questions and give political responses. Those who refused to do so were accused of being irresponsible. They understandably expressed some irritation, asking where does the so-called responsibility of the powerful lead? Sometimes they even got angry, at least inside, perhaps because their very isolation created uneasiness; is such isolation a badge of honor or is it perhaps a way of justifying powerlessness and failure? If nothing else this led to a search for a deeper spirituality and more profound political analysis, strengthening their witness and enriching the church.

The need obviously flows both ways. Realists are more concerned with effectiveness than purity. They usually hold "responsible" positions in one institution or another, and are tempted to think for that reason that they are more "responsible" people. Either by circumstance or temperament, rarely from personal fault, they are inclined to be a touch unconcerned with abstract principle. To get something done, they are prepared to fudge a bit. Once on the effectiveness trail, they have "to get their hands dirty." On the quite understandable conviction that getting things done is at least moderately useful and not necessarily a sin, they resent charges that they have "sold out." Sometimes their irritation, like that of the pacifist, turns to anger, perhaps because, being Christians, they have that image of Jesus in the back of their heads and thus feel a little bit guilty. Like the pacifists, too, they have their occupational hazards. Defining Christian politics as still the art of the possible, they are tempted to accept the present limits of possibility and lose the utopian edge of Christian hope. Perhaps worst of all, sitting at meetings with powerful men and touched by the sincerity of the "decision-makers," they may forget the victims, forget those not at the table.

And then there are the folks in the middle, idealists in their religion, realists in their politics. At one and the same time they want to use the religious language of peace, love, and community and also have a place for Christian ethics at the policy-making table, no mean feat. Quite properly, they are struggling to be both leaders of the church and participants in the public dialogue. Accordingly they want to foster a deeper commitment to peace, even though the minority of pacifists who predictably emerge sometimes make them very nervous. On the other hand, they also want to speak in a language that will be understood by wider publics and they want to avoid placing unfair burdens on the consciences of their own members engaged in wider societal processes. In that wider society they may occasionally meet obviously sincere people apparently ready to do quite immoral things, and that must make them even more nervous.

NOW WHAT WOULD I do if I was speaking for a church that included both Phil Berrigan and Alexander Haig? In the last year some Catholics have decided that one or the other of those men was not a suitable speaker for a Catholic audience. Personally, I'd find Berrigan a more proper speaker, and I can't help having reservations about Haig. But that doesn't mean I'm ready to move toward excommunication. If your committee comes down on the side of either Bishop Hunthausen, who has refused to pay his taxes, or Cardinal Cooke, who presides over Catholic military personnel, I suspect some Catholics will renounce their fellowship with other Catholics; I'm not sure that would be fruitful. What is clear, I think, is that if we want Archbishop Bernardin and the episcopal conference to continue looking both ways, toward the church and toward the public, we should be grateful that we have both pacifists and realists asking what they are doing and why they are doing it. The pacifists keep them and the rest of us honest by recalling the fairly clear demands of Jesus; the realists keep them and us honest in another way by recalling the fairly harsh realities of the real world, important because real people live there. The commitment of the church, John Paul II reminds us, is not to masses or classes, not to "abstract man," but to "real, concrete historical man." So it is in the interest, and I think it is

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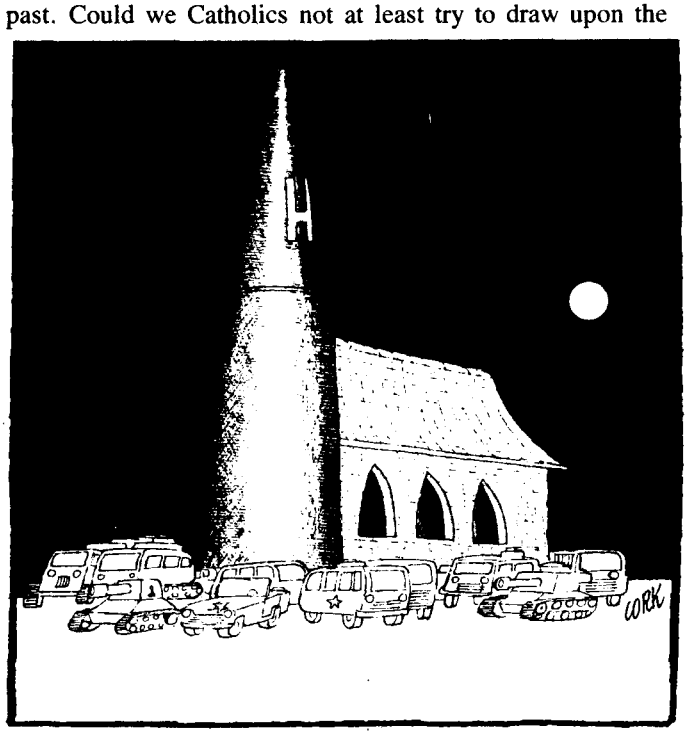
part of the pastoral task, of bishops to cherish both groups, to pastor them by affirming, supporting, and caring for them, but also by calling them to account, asking them what they are doing, and why, a calling that can take the form of conversation with each other through the forums of a shared church. It can be done. It has something to do, I think, with what is Catholic about us.

But there is more, much more to be said, for there is that area of agreement. I think we should work to deepen it more than broaden it, deepen it in the sense of making the imperatives of peacemaking a more integral part of our lives in church and in society, incorporating those imperatives, and the symbols from which they derive, more deeply, into our prayer, our worship, our common life, enabling us to know more fully what we are called to as Catholic Christians. We have to learn how to be church in ways which draw us back into that wider world we are to serve rather than into ourselves, to a self-justifying isolation and defeatism. With all the skills, talents, and experiences of our membership we have to probe the meaning of peace and the meaning of justice in the contemporary world. For too long we have accepted with a kind of fatalistic resignation the choices presented us by others. The right tells us to forget human rights; the center to value political and civil rights but forget social and economic rights; the left to appreciate that social justice and economic progress can come about only with the temporary suppression of civil liberties and political freedom. And now we allow that deadly debate to divide the church. The Roman Catholic community values both freedom and justice as indispensable to human dignity. Can we not make a positive contribution to public debate or must we be simply mindless supporters of tired liberalism or self-serving conservatism? We need new political choices in the United States, and they must transcend the categories of the past. Could we Catholics not at least try to draw upon the sincere dedication to peace and justice that is spreading through the church, listen to the voice of our sister churches around the world, mobilize the talents and energies of our people, and find some constructive proposals to present to our fellow citizens? What passes for political commentary today is eloquent sarcasm directed at Haig and his friends or at Edward Kennedy, Ramsey Clark, and their friends. We ought to be able to do better than that. We will do better not by excommunicating one another or by posing the same choices in the church that are posed outside it. Only by actively encouraging debate, by calling one another to focus on the demands of the Gospel, taking responsibility in and for the church, drawing on our own knowledge and experience, will we be able to enter the public arena with something to say worth listening to.



3. Pastoral proposals

THERE ARE many ways to do all this. You bishops could foster extensive conversations across tables between leaders of factions, for example between religiously oriented activists and lay persons involved in decision-making. You could insist that peacemaking is a central task, not a peripheral one, for the church, and direct your offices and agencies to make that clear in their programming and in diocesan operations. You could keep trying to speak to public issues on behalf of the church, but with modesty, while calling your people's attention to the fact that if they want to get something done by influencing parties, candidates, and government, *they* will have to do it. Political obligation spreads through the church; political action is the task of the laity.

The truth is, there are very few people out there who don't already know, at some level of awareness, that there is a problem affirming Jesus and yet building nuclear weapons, in loving the poor and yet throwing their neighbors to the wolves, in acknowledging the call to Christian discipleship and yet building missile guidance systems. What they need is not your repeated insistence that there are problems, but the love and support which will enable them to overcome defeatism and privatism, and to face the problems with people who care about them; then they, not you or I, will find the ways to overcome them. Often our assured prescriptions for the moral dilemmas of others are ways of avoiding our own. As Peter Maurin once put it: It used to be said of Christians, "See how they love one another." Now it might be said, "See how they pass the buck." Bishops blame lay people, lay people blame priests, priests blame bishops. Realists entwined with governments and corporations insist that the problems in South America arise not from their behavior but from the sentimentality of Maryknoll; idealists blame their own failure to convince the public or influence the democratic process on the realists. Bishops, at least, ought to tell their people to stop all that, bring them together to face the problem, make a judgment about it and find ways of acting appropriate to their circumstances. We tend to forget that the problem, after all, is not pacifism or realism, but war and weapons; not liberation theology or neoconservatism, but injustice. We are all very

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Catholic and very American; as church we lament the past, dislike the present, and seek people to blame; as Americans lacking a sense of common interests, we pursue private interests, even religious ones. Somebody, somewhere, has to say there is a good of us all that transcends our private good. We are called to be peacemakers, not buck passers; we are called to hunger and thirst after justice, so maybe, meekly and with due humility, we should take a crack answering as well as asking some of the questions. I doubt Philip Berrigan or Bryan Hehir or you bishops can do that alone. I wonder if you and they and we might do it together.

YOU WANT SOME more specific suggestions perhaps; I leave you with a few:

1. Establish a national justice and peace commission to include leaders of business, labor, government, national organizations and movements to develop more informed and intelligent programs for church work on peace and justice and to share with bishops responsibility for the public witness of the church.

2. Assign priests, sisters, and laity to work with the peace movements in all its manifestations, in the same way that many local churches assigned priests to work with the labor movement in the 1930s. Establish diocesan justice and peace commissions to support local efforts and to assist in integrating justice and peace considerations into all aspects of local programs. Expand the resources of the U.S. Catholic Conference to monitor research and educational material on international justice and peace and to disseminate these resources through the local commissions.

3. Encourage religious orders to undertake ministerial efforts in the worlds of government and business especially, both through their own professional employment in such settings and through forms of community life and pastoral action among Christians at work in such settings.

4. Issue a strong appeal to Catholic colleges and universities, and to Catholic scholars in other settings, to give the highest priority to research and education in areas related to world justice and peace. In addition to information and ethical reflection on current policies, there should be constructive efforts to develop alternative policy proposals and to work closely with Catholic scholars from other nations and from international organizations and agencies.

5. Revise current approaches to the permanent diaconate and to lay ministry to give highest priority not to internal church work but to work in politics, business, culture, and local community development. Ministry within the church is and should be considered as ministry to the ministers, to the men and women who, in the world, are on the front line of the church's contemporary mission.

6. Call upon the many talented Catholics working in the media for help in determining how best you can communicate the church's peacemaking message. The church should use its own networks, and its ties with sister churches, to give an honest picture of the conditions in other countries and broaden the horizons of American consciousness.

7. Begin plans for a national pastoral council to focus on the church's peacemaking mission. To be credible and effective, this event must be preceded by concrete steps to place concerns of mission to the world at the center of the church's life. Who, in fact, cares much about ordaining women or electing bishops in a church that cares only for itself?

8. Write a good pastoral letter and make sure it gets read by Catholics and gets noticed by non-Catholics. Insofar as we wish to remain a truly Catholic church, we must insist again and again that this world is our world, that we share responsibility for its fate, and that we are called in a special way to serve at the frontiers where human dignity is most gravely threatened. From the earliest days in our community children should learn that we are Catholics not in order to stand in judgment on everybody else, but in order to build each other up in ways that enable us to carry out worldly responsibilities more energetically and creatively. Catholicism shares in what Richard Neuhaus calls the "culture forming task;" it carries out that task both by the quality of its own life and by the quality of its participation in the common life.

Conclusion

ALL OF US have reason to be grateful for the faith courage of those peace activists who have pushed and shoved the rest of us towards a clearer understanding of the dangers confronting the human community and of our responsibility for those dangers. The continued growth of a strong peace movement, oriented in a pacifist direction, can only strengthen the church and the nation. Yet the church as a whole should avoid the temptation to adopt a uniform position of prophetic witness based on such pacifism. The categories of the just war, at their heart an effort to place restraints on force and violence in international relations and within war itself, remain essential to a full Christian standpoint on war and peace. Beyond that, the peacemaking imperative is not exhausted by personal commitment and witness. If all Catholics became pacifists tomorrow, there would surely be a major shift in international public opinion. But political problems, and problems of war and weapons, would remain. Some people would still have to make the compromises and engage in the secular tasks required to build structures of peace. On the one hand, that work will not even be undertaken without transcendent hope born of commitment to peace; on the other it will not be fruitful without a willingness to confront the realities of power and the ambiguities of politics. As leaders of the church you must affirm both prophetic and political obligations, encourage all members to bring faith and politics into the business of daily life, and assist all groups and movements to take on the peacemaking task in ways which support and enrich one another.

Concretely you must wrestle with the problem of translating words into action. Prayer is important, and education on the issues is important. Movements need actions, so demonstrations, vigils, petition drives are also valuable. But something more is needed, even if the peace movement grows and the

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process of arms negotiations earlier represented by SALT is revived. At one and the same time our country needs to grapple with the problems posed by revived international economic competition; find new and more equitable policies dealing with world resources; re-examine its relations with third world nations; and work out ways of resolving differences with the Soviet Union. Only the most positive and vigorous revival of political participation, intelligence, and imagination will make it even conceivable that we can do these things, much less do them with fairness and some degree of decency. Building awareness of the nuclear danger, and of the social, economic, and political injustices of the world system, is a step, but it is a step that can be taken in ways that remove us even further from politics in its widest sense. Most of us, for better or worse, will continue to work and consume and occasionally vote; we are not going to enter a monastery or join a revolutionary front. How are we going to make our *de facto* participation in our political and economic systems principled, responsible, and effective? That is the question.

As the church we must help one another answer it. Your role, at its best, is to direct our attention to the problems; insist on our responsibility to address them; help make our answers informed, intelligent, and in accord with the demands of faith; and, from time to time, serve as our spokesmen to the world at large. As you address the government, don't forget your people. All of us together will make a difference or none of us, even you, will make much difference at all.

Sincerely,

DAVID J. O'BRIEN

'OUR PRINICPAL NOVELIST OF NUTTY IDEAS'

Minding the world

SAUL MALOFF

IN BELLOW'S Bucharest, as in Ceausescu's, life is harsh, gray, damp, chilly, frozen. Terror is always possible, lurking yet remote, elsewhere: the atmosphere is post-Stalinist, steely, lightless. The Revolution has long since drowned in its own excrescence; queues form for scarce goods — the permanent image in the unpainted murals of failed revolutions. The forms of despotism, as it is experienced by Albert Corde, the American university Dean come to that unlikely capital in the company of his Rumanian wife to pay last respects to his dying mother-in-law, are grotesque rather than terrifying, a tyrannous, meanspirited, byzantine bureaucracy staffed by unchanging types recognizable from the nineteenth as from the ninth century.

Having come from Chicago for this final visit and having committed the unforgivable sin of making an unauthorized visit to the hospital bed of the comatose woman, the Cordes will not be permitted to see her again — so rules the commissar in charge of these matters. The daughter, Minna, a distinguished astrophysicist, defected with the blessings and active collusion of her mother, Valeria, herself a distinguished scientist; Valeria was thereupon cast into outer darkness by the Party; the brief bedside visit has not gone through the correct procedures — and that's that: no visiting.

Phones are tapped, but clumsily, obviously, and to no purpose; surveillance, like the cold, is a permanent fact of life, omnipresent, brutal, pointless. Boredom — spiritlessness, inanimation — is more deadly than the secret police. A carton of American cigarettes bends iron rules, opens most doors.

Back home in Chicago, the Antichrist has already descended, and — as anyone not utterly blinded by ideology or well-meant but deceiving received ideas can clearly perceive — the Antichrist prevails. No contest, a mismatch: in Bellow's world-view, the End of Days is no mere way of speaking. For a long time we had been moving inexorably in that direction and though the truth has not yet been universally recognized, it is nonetheless so that the "inner city," a condition of the soul as much as of urban blight and moral plague, has spread outward to encompass the whole visible world.

Bellow is our only serious novelist of general ideas; and he is at his best always a novelist first — ideas, that is, are embodied, enfleshed in person and event, gesture and word, act and scene. At his best Bellow has always seemed happiest, wildly happy, when this fusion of idea and its dramatic actualization is most completely realized and the ideas, penetrated and impaled by imagination, crackle and pop, leap and lurch, the flakier the better. Bellow is our chronicler, our principal novelist of nutty ideas: he is fatally attracted to them, and they are, at divers times, essential to his genius as they can also be his undoing. When ideas catch fire and seem imagined into life as if new and previously undreamt-of under the sun, Bellow is incomparable, a joy to the world, one of the few novelists worth our most serious attention; when they fail to ignite they turn pale and die — nothing is quite so dead as a disembodied idea. Or, this being Bellow after all, they may thrash about,

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struggling violently for a life of their own, and may attain a kind of goofy vitality—wild improvisations in the hands of a brilliant talker answerable to nobody.

The governing ideas in *The Dean's December* (Harper & Row. $13.95. 312 pp.) while hardly startling, are peculiarly Bellow's and have come to bear his distinctive tone, manner, signature, quirks and habits of mind and imagination — his "spin," as he says. The world is in a very bad way, a gasp away from extinction. In the Stalinist East, gloom, death, hopelessness; in the played-out West, chaos, disorder, violence, bloody mayhem in the streets, corruption, vice, some unnamable disease of the spirit. And here and there, both there and here, fragile vestiges of civilization, the memory of what life could be, once was, and of those remembered gestures enacted in impossible circumstances, infinitely touching though on the brink of extinction, as in the old courtesies and loving kindnesses of Minna Corde's Bucharest family, survivors of some ancient regime beyond history and politics. Against the triumphant Antichrist, in a manner of speaking, what can prevail? What forces can be aligned against the overwhelming force of history in its final phase? How shall we live in the world as given? Such questions as these are deeply embedded in Bellow's novel (and in his work in general) and the small answers to large questions — civility, poetry, the redemptive powers of art, the *truthtelling* of art — are easy enough to speak but less accommodating to dramatic representation. But Bellow is possessed of a powerful sense of his art and its truth as standing alone against the rising floods, seeking the precisely right spin of language for pacifying those raging waters. Bellow talking is always worth listening to, even when the spin is slightly or even wildly awry; and this can be said with confidence of no other American novelist.

IN THIS WINTRY novel the sense of urgency is so compelling Bellow wants above all to talk, and never mind the niceties of narrative and drama — never mind fiction in any of the more conventional senses. And so Bellow talks, wonderfully generally, crankily at times, tendentiously, polemically, settling old scores, setting the record straight. Not for the first time in his work is the talker recognizably Bellow himself; never has that been more so than here. Albert Corde can be tricked out with all manner of physical disguise to distinguish him from Bellow, and provided with bizarre particulars (among other things he's given a French Huguenot-Irish lineage, of which nothing at all is made) and uncongenial background (he was formerly a Paris-based correspondent for the International *Herald Tribune* who returned to an unnamed university in his native Chicago first as professor and now as Dean of Students); but no matter, he is unmistakably Bellow. Bellow not Corde read Rilke's letters, Aristotle and Plato, Hegel and Marx, Swedenborg, Balzac and the Victorian poets — and everything else: read far, far too much, as Corde keeps saying; and it is Bellow, not Corde, who is dreamily adrift in the book's ideas and assessments, language and idiosyncracies — his own sovereignty, his "special sense of life," as Corde-Bellow remarks at one point.

Bucharest is the scene of the current action, such as it is; but Chicago, from which the Cordes departed and to which they'll return, is clamorously present in Corde's reflections. In Bucharest, the old lady lies dying, dies never having emerged from her coma, and is cremated and interred; the imagery, as much political and moral as physical, is grim, cold, dark, iron — an imagery of failed revolutions, high intentions debased, regressed into spite, malice, petty persecution when it is not murderous. Chicago is roiling, filled not only with Bellow's cast of characters, that "special kind of highly intelligent top-grade barbarian" who fill his pages with their violent energies and nuttiness. A white student has been killed by a black and Corde will not rest until justice is done, though the circumstances are ambiguous and he might have let it lie; his nephew, afire with revolutionary passions or oedipal rages, denounces him most roundly, in the cadence and language of the late sixties; and as if Corde weren't already a source of enough embarrassment to his university, he has written some articles for *Harper's* describing jailhouse conditions in particular and how life in general goes in the ghetto that bring great unhappiness to City Hall.

The Antichrist, casting about for likely places to descend upon in the actual world, will, I daresay, have an embarrassment of riches to choose among; but if he is given to confusing art and life, Bellow's Chicago, by all odds the best-realized city in American literature, beats all contenders hands down. A mammoth sewer runs beneath that great city of architectural marvels, with a capacity of forty billion gallons, as wide as three locomotives side by side, running a hundred miles deep — tons of excrement will topple the topless towers of *that* Ilium at the End of Days. So it is written. But while Corde is worried about real towers collapsing into fecal seas, less visible varieties of doom torment him even more; environmental poisons, dripping moral and chemical venom, menace not only Chicago, Corde says, in one of many moments of high feeling, but the "whole world. And it isn't the Grand Inquisitor's universal anthill that we have to worry about after all, but something worse, more titanic — universal stupefaction, a Saturnian, wild, gloomy murderousness, the raging of irritated nerves, and intelligence reduced by metal poison, so that the main ideas of mankind die out, including of course the idea of freedom," already direly stricken and quite, quite dead over much of the inhabited globe.

AGAINST ALL THIS, how can civility and poetry avail? In a world of "superfluous populations," of "doomed people," in an age marked by "wounds, lesions, cancers, destructive fury, death," where every man carried within him his own *inner* inner city — cesspool and sewer, slum and jailhouse — of what possible use is the "well-disposed liberal democratic temperament" that cannot say outright "an evil has been done" because it is "rooted in a deformed conception of human nature" — in such a world as this, what can we mean when we say the "forms that made true experience were corrupted" by vulgar, shallow journalism, tawdry "event glamour" and that "reality," having been lost

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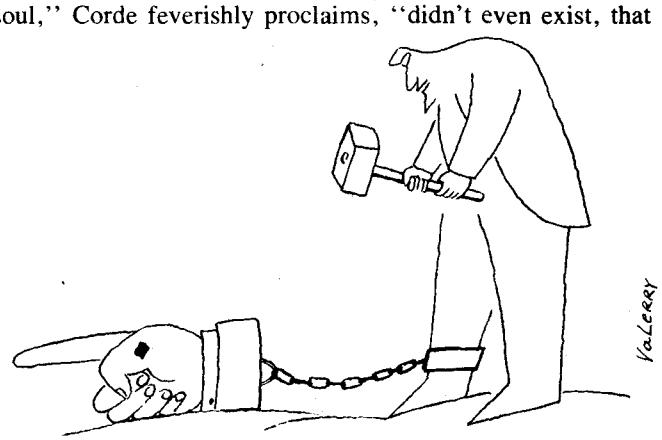
by such "false consciousness," can only be retrieved, restored to us, by and through the interventions of art?

Now, unless this is to be a mere pretty piece of aestheticism or grandiloquent classroom bombast, Bellow must make good on the implied pledge to redeem reality by his art. And he attempts to do just that by recreating the world, fresh and new, cleansed of the sludge of cliché, received ideas, tarnished imagery. That is the novel's triumph — the lovingly detailed descriptive passages ranging from ordinary objects perceived in the ordinary course of daily life to the marvelous pages devoted to Valeria's death, cremation, interment, so that this death, the death of this person and no other, will be memorialized forever. The mission to record and chronicle is seen as sacred; and Bellow, being strange on this subject, means just that. If the *mysterium tremendum* is the astronomer-mathematician Minna's playground, the phenomenal world of flux is Corde's, his own bailiwick.

All history is sacred history, including the history of sewers. Thomas Hardy said he wanted to be remembered — he wanted it inscribed on his gravestone — as a "man who noticed such things"; Corde, en route to the cemetery, sits steeped in reverie, the appointed guardian of the things of the world, making minute observations as if they were truths of ultimate importance, and thinks that this after all is what he is on earth to do: "He looked out, noticing. What a man he was for noticing! Continually attentive to his surroundings. As if he had been sent down to *mind* the outer world, on a mission of observation and notation. The object of which was? To link up? To classify? To penetrate?" But these meditations appear in a *novel*, not in a philosophical treatise; as if reminded of this interesting fact Corde brings himself up sharply and adds: "To follow a sprinting little van-hearse over gloomy boulevards was the immediate assignment," thereby getting on with the work of fiction in an afterthought.

The achievement of the novel is thus exactly assessed and wonderfully put: Corde-Bellow as a world-minder, in both senses — as guardian against the barbarian at the door, and as observing, notating, connecting, classifying mind retrieving the world from its obscurers and distorters and purveyors of false consciousness — the work of salvation that is the proper work of art. The metaphysical predicate is made explicit: without mind and art the "literal world" is devoid of substance, of reality — "what you didn't pass through your soul," Corde feverishly proclaims, "didn't even exist, that was what made the literal literal." In creating Chicago he passes it "through his own soul" but only as a "mass of data, terrible, murderous," lacking the "force of coherence," and awaiting the reality it would attain "only when the soul found its underlying truth." Who but Bellow? If the presiding deity isn't Rudolph Steiner, it's Plato.



THE NOVEL'S other great achievement lies in its attempts to dramatize its mass of terrible, murderous data and disclose its underlying truth; and Bellow attempts this by means of what he does superbly well — argument outright, face-to-face adversary argument, the direct antagonism of opposed perspectives, the elucidation of conflicting ideas and viewpoints through dialectic, though with the difference that he's interested more in thesis and antithesis than in synthesis in the form — least of all in easy resolution. And in argument no one is fairer than Bellow — the devil is given the stronger, more eloquent, seemingly persuasive arguments. The scene between Corde and his nephew, the self-styled revolutionary, fantasist, and "white Negro" who fancies himself blacker than thou and more incendiary than any firebrand that ever brought down a corrupt social system — this scene is perfectly fashioned by the hand of the master; and so are the obligatory scenes between Corde and his boyhood friend and implacable rival Dewey Spangler, now a famous journalist passing through Bucharest, scenes intended to test and, if he can, undermine Corde's essential modes of world-minding: art and metaphysics confronted by worldly savvy, hardheaded, skeptical and outright brusquely dismissive realism impatient with any form of damn nonsense, especially that of the loftier variety, all that fancy rot about art and philosophy, the mind and the soul.

But these are brilliant set-pieces, virtuoso performances of undiminished power and authority intermittently disturbing the flow and cascades of Corde's reflections and observations. And the ideas, the criticism of life embedded in the scandalous articles (the horror! the horror!) are fairly familiar by now, to put it generously, however fresh in detail, however spinning and bucking, however vivid and strong in expression. As reproduced in long excerpts, there is no reason why they mightn't have appeared in *Harper's* as they stand — classy magazine articles but magazine articles all the same. "With ordinary consciousness," Corde thinks at one point, "you can't even begin to know what's happening." Yet ordinary consciousness raised to the magnitude of force and subtlety of Bellow's ordinary consciousness certainly begins the process of knowing what's happening and takes us a considerable distance into it. Beyond that we are adrift in ozone, Bellow's preferred rarified atmosphere where breathing is not always easy. No novelist is more worldly than Bellow, and none more otherworldly.

The metaphor is not accidental. At the end Corde accompanies his wife to Mount Palomar, where as a distinguished astronomer she peers into spacious mysteries at the eye of the great telescope. A colleague of hers takes the Dean along for the ride and a fast look around astral space. Nothing could be

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more congenial to Corde's taste for infinity and the "cold *out there*, its power to cancel everything merely human," a cold "not to be compared to the cold of the death house" in which Valeria was cremated, in fact the precise opposite of it, here where "the living heavens looked as if they would take you in." But cold is cold and he has had enough of it in the Bucharest death house. "It *is* damn cold," he tells the young astronomer as they descend to where we all live, some distance below the invisible kingdom; and when he is asked whether he really minds all that much, he replies in what is the final line of the novel: "The cold? Yes. But I almost think I mind coming down more."

No pestilential sewers up there, rampaging rivers of excrement reeking of the human condition; which is all very well for astronomers, astral space and the cold which cancels everything merely human — but who's going to mind the world down here and attend to the merely human that is the base stuff of novels?

Screen

GAY PAREE

VICTOR/VICTORIA

PARIS IN 1934 was not a real place. It was like the woods in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, somewhere that people went to take leave of their senses. It was, you should pardon the expression, a fairyland, which is why Blake Edwards chooses to set *Victor/Victoria* there. The naughty night life of Paris was the only place homosexuals and transvestites were in vogue in those days. In the opening shot of Edwards's movie, the camera pans across a night table containing a framed photograph of Marlene Dietrich in drag, and comes to rest on the sleeping face of Toddy (Robert Preston). Awaking to find his boyfriend sneaking a few francs out of his wallet, Toddy consoles himself with a few lines from—what else?—*Midsummer Night's Dream*: "Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,/ And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind." A world like that in Shakespeare's festive comedies is what Edwards has created here, a topsy-turvy world that, as Theseus puts it, "gives to airy nothing/ A local habitation and a name."

Perhaps one might sooner have expected to hear *Twelfth Night* or *Two Gentlemen of Verona* quoted, for they're the plays in which a woman masquerades as a man. Like Shakespeare's Julia in *Two Gentlemen*, Edwards's Julie—i.e., his wife Julie Andrews—here makes her way in the world by donning men's clothes. Actually, they're Toddy's boyfriend's clothes, which Victoria (Andrews) puts on after spending a night with Toddy because her own clothes, drenched in the rain following a brawl at a restaurant, have shrunk so much that she can no longer get into. . . . But it's all too complicated and silly to explain, like any comedy of errors. When the boyfriend returns, Victoria hides in the *armoire*; and when he opens it to retrieve his suit, she comes out again, fist first. This incident inspires Toddy with the idea that Victoria could take Paris by storm as a female impersonator, or rather, as an impersonator of a female impersonator, since she already is a female. . . . The same incident inspires Blake Edwards to do at least a half dozen more out-of-the-closet gags before the film is over.

Most of these center on the wardrobe closet in the swanky hotel suite to which Toddy and Victoria move when she's a hit. A couple of people come out of that closet, having first snuck into it to spy on Victoria. One is a Chicago gangster, King Marchand (James Garner), who doesn't believe Victoria is a man. The other, a detective, is in there because he doesn't believe it either. *Victor/Victoria* is just a collection of running gags of this sort. Anything funny that happens is bound to happen again, and again. *Chez Lui*, the nightclub where Toddy used to sing, is totally demolished in a fight not once, but twice. Victoria's ability to hit high C keeps breaking glasses and popping champagne corks throughout the film, and a waiter who served her a meal when she was still a woman gets the same quizzical expression on his face every time he sees her as a man. Every *double entendre* in Edwards's script is just the beginning of a *triple entendre*, a *quadruple entendre*, etc.

One of the most elaborately milked routines is when King sneaks into Victoria's suite to spy on her. From King's own suite across the courtyard, his bodyguard, "Squash" Bernstein (Alex Karras), sees him there. Squash now breaks into Victoria's himself to make sure that King doesn't get into any trouble, then Victoria and Toddy come home so that Squash and King both have to sneak out. King gets back to discover through the window that Squash is still across the way, trapped on Victoria's balcony in the snow. Through all these comings

and goings, a man down the hall from Victoria's room has been trying to put his shoes out to be shined. But every time he opens the door, he finds either King or Squash lurking in the hall. On his last attempt he catches Squash stealing away from Victoria's door in his bathrobe covered with snow. "Is there heat in your room?" asks Squash as if just on his way down to the desk to complain.

Despite the fact that it builds up every gag to the point where we think the whole movie is going to fall apart like a house of cards, *Victor/Victoria* is really a work of great economy. Nothing is stretched out one second longer than needed to get the laugh. The *dénouement* to all the closet gags comes, for

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instance, when Victoria unknowingly slams the closet door on the finger of the detective. While she continues on her way out of the room, the finger just stays there, crushed in the door, which at last opens a few inches as a low moan is heard. That's all. Another director would have made more of the detective's agony, and gotten less of a laugh.

The movie runs two hours, which is long for a comedy. But Edwards is able to cram so much material into it that it never flags. It's full of minor characters who are all running gags themselves. In doing three or four scenes with that detective (Sherloque Tanney), Edwards draws on all he learned from making Inspector Clouzot movies, and the waiter who does double-takes at Victoria is equally well executed. With just a gesture or a word, Edwards establishes a whole personality for this fellow. Where the classic French waiter is solicitous and attentive, this one is sarcastic and a bit uncouth. He unceremoniously bends a fork to straighten it as he plunks it down at Victoria's place; and when she complains that a *bourguignon* is a little tough, he observes laconically, "The way you're eating, maybe your jaws are getting tired."

Watching the plot develop behind glass, as Squash and King do every time one of them looks out the window at Victoria's suite, is another frequent gag in this movie, and another example of the economy and underplaying of which Edwards is capable. Light-headed with hunger, Victoria watches from outside as a fat man in a restaurant eats a cream puff. The camera switches to a reverse angle of the man, and back to the window where Victoria is. Except that she's no longer there, the reason being, we surmise from the people standing around staring at the sidewalk, that she's fainted in the street. When Squash has to put King's moll Norma (Lesley Ann Warren) on a train home, the tantrum she's having continues soundlessly after she's behind the window of her car. As a brawl erupts in the restaurant where Victoria is eating her *bourguignon*, the shot cuts to across the street so that we see the whole scene as a kind of silent panorama, a lunatic *tableau*.

This makes the scene all the funnier, but like other inventions of Edwards's, it distances us from the action as well. The romantic poverty and Art Deco luxury of Paris in the thirties are so remote, the love life of Victoria so preposterous, that we can't have much feeling for them in the end. Again, Edwards has to know just where to stop. All at once Henry Mancini's songs, which have until now been hilarious, change mood with a ballad about how "it's a crazy world, full of contradictions." King and Victoria begin to have serious talks about where can it all lead. And we begin to hope Edwards doesn't ruin everything by letting the farce slip away. But no. He ends his film and solves all its complexities with one swelled foop. Having asked, "What is love?" as Shakespeare does in *Twelfth Night*, Blake also dismisses the question by answering, " 'Tis not hereafter;/ Present mirth hath present laughter."

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

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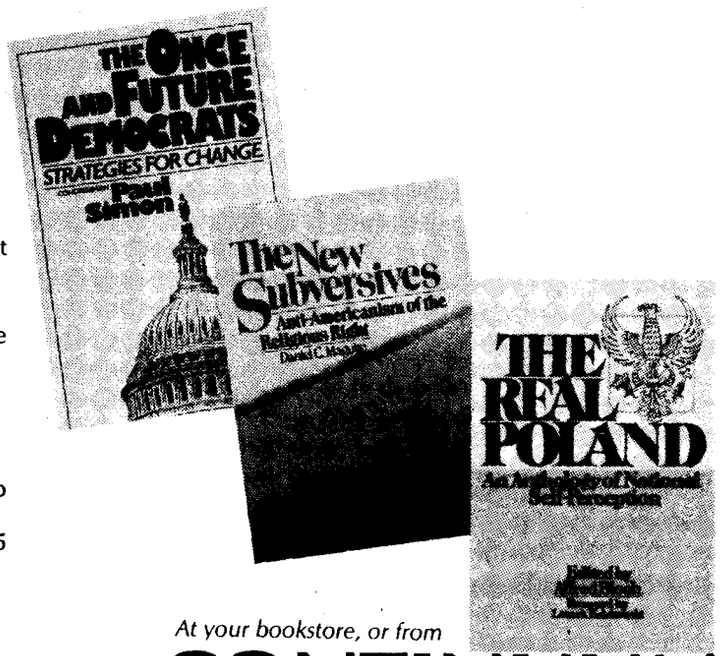

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Books: PERSPECTIVES ON POWER

THE KENNEDY IMPRISONMENT
A MEDITATION ON POWER
Garry Wills
Little-Brown, $14.95, 301 pp.

William V. Shannon

GARRY WILLS is a highly intelligent and erudite writer who possesses considerable literary power and usually makes interesting points about any subject he chooses to discuss. He also often writes carelessly and in haste and has an overly dogmatic cast of mind and a deficient sensibility. These characteristic strengths and weaknesses are again present in this book about the three Kennedy brothers, analyzing them as holders and seekers of power.

Since this is a book about power, the author's own political stance is significant. Wills moved from a young right-wing conservative to a radical without ever having stopped to enjoy—or struggle with—the responsibilities of liberalism. He is also a pacifist. Perhaps because I am a liberal and not a pacifist, I find his discussion of liberal mainstream politicians such as the Kennedys consistently out of focus, enormously enlarging some of their qualities and actions and blurring others. In my judgment, the scattered insights that Wills offers do not compensate sufficiently for the fundamental confusion arising from the mismatch between the author and his material.

I have mentioned Wills's sensibility. The book opens with fifty-seven pages of unrelenting fact, gossip, and speculation about the sex lives of the Kennedys. It is as tedious as wading through the pages of *Penthouse*. If this were a novel, one would suspect the author of getting all the commercially required "hot" scenes out of the way at the beginning.

There then follow several chapters on Kennedy family life which are often embarassing and speckled with error. Thus, he has Edward Kennedy being born in 1936, rather than 1932; the family taking its winter vacations in Palm Springs rather than Palm Beach; and describes grandfather "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald as "the Purple Shamrock himself," a term originated to describe Fitzgerald's rival, James Michael Curley.

He contrasts the Irish, Catholic, and rich family of William Buckley with the Kennedys, to the consistent disadvantage of the latter. "The Buckleys are . . . less thoroughly detached from their origins—some have even married Irish spouses. Religion gets more than lip service from most Buckley children."

But on the next page, he writes: "To some degree, the Buckleys freed their daughters from convent backgrounds—while Kennedy girls were at Manhattanville, the Buckleys were at Smith."

If those facts were reversed, no one after reading this book could doubt that Wills would cite them as "evidence" against the Kennedys.

After all this gossip and low-grade sociology has laid a foundation, the author proceeds to meditate on power as the Kennedys wielded it. He has much sport—as writers on this theme easily can—with the dazzling Kennedy image and style. But he seems never to realize that, unfortunately or not, appearances are part of the reality of politics. Did not Eisenhower or Roosevelt work just as carefully as Kennedy to contrive their own images? It is naive to think that "the Appearances Presidency" began with JFK.

Wills's central theme is that Ken-

(Continued on page 315)

POWER AND AUTHORITY IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
CARDINAL CODY IN CHICAGO
Charles W. Dahm with Robert Ghelardi
Notre Dame, $18.95, 288 pp.

Michael E. Schiltz

THE MOST generous appraisal of this book is that its authors had the misfortune to study the wrong place at the wrong time.

The Vatican Council unleashed a generation of anguish — not yet over — in which men and women struggle, at great and sometimes fatal risk of spirit, to make order in the church of twenty centuries that they loved and thought they knew. In Chicago, the appointment of a conservative and insecure Archbishop to the most richly liberal archdiocese in America only exacerbated the inexorable tension of worlds in collision.

Such is not the landscape on which to study the appropriate limits of the exercise of human power in a divine institution. To make matters worse, the authors bring to their analysis a simplistic and inflexible view of democracy in the church that obscures any real understanding of the underlying issues. The result is a brutally insensitive caricature of a passing order not fully appreciated and a new order not yet fully understood. The inevitable victims of this arrogant exercise of pseudo-scholarship are the real life actors themselves, whose human frailties are shorn of their larger contexts and thus grossly exaggerated.

The book focuses on the twenty years of conflict and hostility between the Association of Chicago Priests and John Cardinal Cody, Archbishop of Chicago. Although the authors clearly and uncompromisingly side with the Chicago priests at every turn, the priests emerge as squabbling, ineffective, timid, selfish, and obsessively concerned with status and security. Maybe so. Like Cody, they were wholly unprepared for the place into which history had thrust them. But

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they managed, with Cody's tacit consent, to preserve for Chicago what is, in 1982, quite certainly still the most vital church in the United States.

Cardinal Cody emerges as ambitious, arrogant, evasive, deceitful, and ruthless. Perhaps at times he was one or more or all of these — they are flaws latent in all of us. But there is more than a remote possibility that John Patrick Cody also loved and respected the institution that he had chosen to serve; and that, like many of his conservative counterparts, he deeply feared the uncharted waters into which the Vatican Council had cast his world. If the church is to proceed into an era of shared power, one is convinced from the evidence of the author's own observations that it cannot come suddenly; and that those, like Cody, who resist cataclysmic revolution, may after all be the ultimate heroes.

The book would make of Cody an archetype — an almost inevitable product, of the evils of the "monarchical" authoritarianism against which the authors so tirelessly inveigh. It becomes difficult in that context to explain the remarkable men that Chicago gave to the episcopacy presumably with Cody's blessing: May, McManus, O'Donnell, Wycislo; even more difficult to explain Roncalli or the Vatican Council.

One could ignore the prurient insensitivity — even the juvenile chapter titles ("Gulliver and the Lilliputians"), if the book had redeeming theoretical or narrative qualities. It has neither.

The central issue of power in church governance is a complex one. Through its twenty centuries the church has realized consensus in a variety of ways — democracy, "monarchy," and, if we are to believe Acts, a flip of the coin. These various modes have been successful to the degree that they were compatible with the civil spirit of the age. The closed, authoritarian pre-Vatican structure of the Roman Church is ill-suited to much of Western society; no one challenges this. The problem is where to go and how to make the transition.

The authors bring no clear insights to bear. Terms like "power," "authority," "monarchy," "democracy," and "participation" are neither defined nor consistently used. The theoretical vignettes that begin or end most chapters are often in unintelligible jargon and, when translated, largely irrelevant. Obvious central difficulties like the tyranny of the mob and the difference between majority and consensus are given no useful exploration. Neither the lessons of eight centuries of Anglo-Saxon political history nor the governance experience of the Protestant churches are brought to bear; and there is no evidence that the authors are aware of what those lessons might be.

If theory is wanting, so is narrative. What happened between priest and bishop, even in this most difficult and unrepresentative of times, might offer insights in the hands of careful and balanced scholars.

Careful scholarship seems not to be an attribute of the work. It is replete with factual errors at those points where established and adequate documentation exists. The authors seem aware at only the most superficial and anecdotal level of the rich history that shaped the aspirations and expectations of the Chicago priests. The majority of the narrative is taken up with the reconstruction of events in the conflict between Cody and the Association of Chicago Priests. Often vivid and colorful, the narrative lacks even the journalist's standard of two independent sources and, on many of the more outrageous incidents, appears to be based on only one improbable witness or none at all. The impression is one of a collection of rumors, gossip, and half-truths, collected from participants in tense and sometimes hysterical situations, sifted and organized only to dramatize the authors' assumption that change is needed.

The author of the preface proudly admits that the book "is not clinically objective." If not, then in a world already at arms against a sea of troubles, of what use is it?

Hitler's trick—and Steiner's

THE PORTAGE TO SAN CRISTOBAL OF A.H.

George Steiner
Simon and Schuster $13.50, 128 pp.

Larzer Ziff

A PARTY of Israelis finally tracks Hitler to his hiding place on the only tuft of dry ground in the innermost core of the unmapped Amazonian swamp. He is aged but in surprisingly good health. As they rush toward his hut to make the capture his guard dies, most probably of fright. And then the portage to San Cristóbal commences, the return of Hitler from slime to the world of the bureaucrats in London, Moscow, Paris, Washington, and Bonn. But while this world, thanks to intercepted short wave messages, waits and dithers and schemes against the moment that the monstrous improbability of the living Hitler's reentry into history becomes reality, the five Israelis who are literally bearing him through the teeming muck conduct their own monologues on the meaning and absurdity of the event. Are the horrors of the Holocaust in any degree at all revenged or purged by what they are doing? Or are they engaged in a massive betrayal of the martyrs, because no treatment of this man can relate to the actuality of the Holocaust except to mock it through trivializing its anguish in a manifestly inadequate symbol?

Thus stated, their problem is also the problem of the author of the fiction in which they appear. George Steiner is among the most prominent of those who have attempted to assist our generation to comprehend an incomprehensible that must be comprehended. He is a spokesman who has warned against the betrayal of the dead that is inherent in the reduction of their agony to verbal formulas. The unspeakable when spoken does not become speakable; it becomes a lie. Yet now Steiner himself has produced a fiction of the unspeakable. The fascination of his work, then, lies in the manner in which he validates his speaking more than in what he has to say.

Steiner cannot avoid either the use of words or the transparency of the illusion that what is rendered in words is inde-

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pendent of them. He knows that. Nor can he avoid convention. To offer a fiction is to abide by the formulas of fiction. He knows that also.

If he is to engage in an enterprise whose very rules appear to prohibit success—a "good" novel will be reductive and inadequate to the magnitude of the historical reality; a novel that defies the conventions of the novel will be a bad novel—how is he to proceed? His tactic is to accept the rules, almost rigidly so, and to attempt to turn them against themselves.

Yes, he is using words, and to underscore the fact that he will not attempt to escape them a great many of the words he uses are about words: the living word of God that lost some infinitesimal fraction of its life once it was transcribed, even under direct inspiration, into the written words of the Bible, a notion that is cabalistically symbolized by the belief that somewhere in the Bible there is one, just one, wrong word, maybe simply an "and"; the words of Hitler's speeches transfixing thousands; the too many words the Jews have spilled across the ages from their sedentary position in history; and, in a wealth of literary allusions, words that call up countless other words.

And yes he is writing a novel. To underscore the fact the portage through the swamp is rendered in acute, naturalistic detail. As the journey progresses the imagery without obstruction becomes cloacal: the Jews in bearing Hitler to the nearest jungle settlement are bearing him to a village characterized as the "anus of the world," they are delivering excrement to the light. It also converts to its opposite and become edenic: for all the fever of the swamp primal life flourishes there—in the closing pages it even brings forth an aborigine who knows meaning without words—so that the Jew and Hitler seem twins preparing to leave myth for history. And beneath both patterns lies the unexpressed one of conveying the ark through the wilderness. But such patterns never qualify the feel of the many, perhaps too many, naturalistic details.

Moreover, the scene of the waiting world to which Steiner continually cuts cinematically are presented in accordance with the formula of the spy thriller. There is no great need of any of the characters who appear in them, but like Ludlum or Forsythe, Steiner delights in abrupt switches from the pain and sweat of the central figures to intimate details of the lives of those in Paris or Oxford who move murmuringly at some remove from physical action. What is the point of all this in a thriller? Quite simply, by delaying further development of the plot while bribing our forbearance with nice bits of out-of-the-way lore about the habits of the rich or the artifices of the international criminal, the author is able to prolong suspense. What is the point of all this in Steiner's novel? Pretty much the same, except that it is so manifestly overdone that he stresses he is using the conventions against themselves the better to release his meaning.

All of which is to say, of course, that the deliberate display of novelistic formulas and the copious use of words (brief novels can be wordy) are designed to break ultimately under their own weight and to point to what is released when the shell is shattered, as it is, in the last few pages.

The Israelis' greatest fear had been that Hitler would begin talking to them and that under his word-spell they would become his will's agents. Through the journey, however, he remained all but mute, his only utterances fragments that a baby might speak, as, indeed, he somewhat resembled a blanketed baby in his litter. Now, at the shattering point, he speaks both with intelligence and yet with his old stridency, and speaks, moreover, to the central point of the novel, his relationship to Judaism. It is a marvelous speech, quite the best thing in the book, and with its arrival the conventions collapse. This speech, not San Cristóbal, is the goal toward which everything had been driving. There is no resolution of the plot line — will they make it back to civilization? How will the world deal with their prisoner? — because formulas of plot have been exhausted by what they could not carry. *The Passage to San Cristóbal* steps forth as a meditation on the theme of the Holocaust.

In his speech, Hitler offers himself as the *Doppleganger* of the Jewish historicization of existence. When he finishes his oration the novel stops abruptly in a cinematic frozen frame. There is no "ending" because for completion there must be a response to Hitler's outrageously sensible points. And that, of course, is precisely where Steiner wants to leave his reader, burdened with the task of constructing the response. He has not offered new ideas about the Holocaust, but he has with wit trapped us into having ideas about it. He has performed a verbal feat, a trick of ideas designed to awaken us to a knowing beyond the mere perceiving of the dreadful, dreadful violence of history.

The depths of theology & friendship

KARL BARTH/RUDOLPH BULTMANN LETTERS, 1922-1966

Edited by Bernd Jaspert, translated & edited by Geoffrey W. Bromily

Eerdmans, $13.95, 192 pp.

Van A. Harvey

THESE LETTERS would be extraordinary even had they not been written by the two great theologians who represent the polar extremes — and possibilities — of Protestant dialectical theology: extraordinary not only for what they tell us about the origins of the most important theological movement in our century, but also for what they reveal about the possibilities of depth in friendship itself. Even though each of these two men possessed enormous intellects that were fused to very different sensibilities, and even though each of them had every all-too-human reason to be jealous of the other (quite apart from the subtle temptation religious faith holds for those in its service to think this service justifies setting aside the ordinary obligations of civility), they were able to deal with one another with utter candor, humility, and graciousness.

They could criticize each other's work, express annoyance at rumors of

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criticisms they had heard, even convey a sense of personal grief at what could be seen as personal distrust (Barth while a guest in Bultmann's home confessed that he had expected his friend to become a German Christian) or professional disrespect (Barth once sent back two sermons Bultmann had submitted to Barth's journal, *Theologische Existenz*, with the judgment that the sermons were not good ones); nevertheless, they never failed to be kind, respectful, and forgiving. The reader, remembering D.H. Lawrence's observation in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* that the academic world is built on spite, can only ask: Is such a largeness of spirit even possible today? Or was it somehow a function of that now departed old world gentility in which, after forty-five years of what would pass for intimacy in modern America, these two intellectual giants would still address one another as "Mr. Bultmann" and "Mr. Barth" and omit the "Du" form?

Bultmann and Barth first met in Marburg in 1908 and became better acquainted at meetings in the home of Martin Rade. This correspondence begins in 1922 with a brief letter from Bultmann to Barth telling him that he had reviewed "your Romans," thanking him for writing it and expressing hope for a more intensive exchange. It ends in May, 1966 with a brief greeting from "ancient Marburg" on the occasion of Barth's eightieth birthday: "From the depths of his heart your old friend wishes you good health and good courage for the new year of your life."

In between are some sixty or so letters and postcards from Bultmann to Barth and about thirty-five of the same from Barth to Bultmann. (Regrettably the translator has decided to paraphrase a few of those he regarded as insubstantial.) To these the editors have added forty most interesting documents, including among others, Barth's letters to von Soden (1934) explaining why he felt morally obligated to add the qualifying clause to the required Hitler oath (for which Barth was fired from Bonn); Barth's letter to Bishop Wurm (1947) explaining why it was a bad idea to institute heresy proceedings against Bultmann; and autobiographical state-

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ments from Barth and Bultmann.

The editors note that the gaps in the correspondence may be explained by the fact that the two continually met for discussion in the early years and even after Barth went to Basle in 1935. After 1939, of course, there was the war. In my opinion, it is probable that there are many of Barth's letters missing because of the delightfully casual way Bultmann filed letters from those of his friends who were authors: he interleafed the letters between the pages of their books he owned. Thus, when he sold his splendid library late in life to a newly founded German university, student readers who checked these books out were astounded to find the most important letters fluttering out of volumes such as Schweitzer's *Quest* or Buber's *I And Thou*. God only knows how many priceless autographs are now framed on the walls of private German homes or, what is perhaps also possible, were thrown away because they were "just old letters."

The early letters are filled with the connivings of the "young turks" who are resolved to overturn the Liberal establishment — there is a delightful plot to sneak Heidegger unannounced into a meeting with Hirsch — and with attempts by Bultmann to get Barth to discuss their fundamental theological differences. It seems to be Bultmann who is the more concerned for Barth's approval and friendship. "Please write and do not regard me as unteachable," he asks. Gradually, extreme intellectual and personal tensions arose over a number of issues important to them both: Bultmann's review of the *Dogmatics*; the Concordat between Prussia and the Evangelical Churches in 1931; and, above all, Barth's decision not to come to Marburg for a discussion with Bultmann's group — a decision Bultmann regarded as "unfriendly" and which Barth justified by his dislike at being "examined" by Bultmann's students "with a mixture of fatherly kindness and policelike acuteness . . ." Bultmann cannot understand Barth's lack of concern for discussion and debate; Barth, in turn, sees no reason to have a debate with "philosophy." It is these letters in 1931 that are the most revealing of the differences in sensibility and theology that separated the two men.

The most extensive theological exchange occurred in 1952 over Barth's monograph "Rudolf Bultmann: An Attempt to Understand Him." Bultmann, characteristically, replies with an enormous letter (sixteen pages in the English translation) patiently taking up Barth's objections one by one. Barth, in turn, responded with a letter about half as long. Each of them does clever things with quotations from Mozart's operas — old world intellectuality at its most urbane. The penultimate letter, (1963) in which Barth thanks Bultmann for sending him an offprint of Bultmann's essay that discusses *Honest to God*, epitomizes the wit and the grace characteristic of the relationship between the two men: "Ponder this, I usually reject this book with Schiller as a 'document of the scandal of our times' and compare its origin to the act of a man who went and drew off the froth from three full glasses of beer (with the inscriptions R.B., P.T., and D.B.), and made out that the resultant mixture was the finally discovered theological elixir, as which it was merrily consumed by thousands and thousands of buyers." He then reminds Bultmann of a nativity scene by Botticelli he has just seen in which two old gentlemen are joyously smiling at one another and Barth writes: "In spite of Woolwich, let us be like these two." He closes by asking if it is true that his old friend is not well, and he wishes him the best "in recollection of the 'beginnings of the dialectical theology.' "

'How you get the truth'

AH, BUT YOUR LAND IS BEAUTIFUL

Alan Paton
Scribners, $12.95, 271 pp.

WAITING FOR THE BARBARIANS

J.M. Coetzee
Penguin Books, $3.95, 156 pp.

Edward Callan

ON FEBRUARY 25, 1982, Dr. Niel Aggett, a white physician turned union organizer, died while held incommunicado at John Vorster Square, the Johannesburg headquarters of South Africa's security police. He was said to have hanged himself. More than thirty-five others held as he was without charge or hearing—beginning with Looksmart Ngudle in 1963—were also said to have killed themselves, some by jumping from windows, others by falling and striking their heads. Patently, the suspension of habeas corpus may endanger life.

The practice of detention or restriction without access to the courts began during the defiance campaign of 1952 when Chief Lutuli was "banned" under the provisions of the 1950 Suppression of Communism Act which empowered the Justice Minister, John Vorster, to restrict anyone who in his opinion "wittingly or unwittingly" furthered the aims of Communism. In time, the Treason Act, the Sabotage Act, and the Bureau of State Security Act known as BOSS, greatly extended the Minister's powers of detention without trial.

How does the man of conscience,or sensitivity, behave in such circumstances? Should he stand aloof, rebel, or do the best he can within the system to alleviate its harshness? This dilemma provides a subtle common theme in these two equally remarkable—though stylistically different—South African novels: Alan Paton's *Ah, But Your Land Is Beautiful* and J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Paton's novel, the first of a projected trilogy, sticks close to historical events. It begins with the launching of

> *For I was not, as I liked to think, the indulgent pleasure-loving opposite of the cold rigid Colonel. I was the lie that Empire tells itself when times are easy, he the truth that Empire tells when harsh winds blow. Two sides of imperial rule, no more, no less.* J.M. Coetzee
> *Waiting for the Barbarians*

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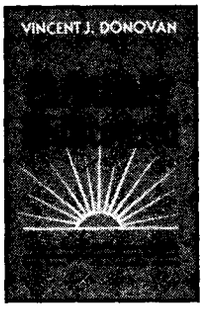
the defiance campaign in July 1952 and its action culminates in the inauguration of Hendrik Verwoerd as Prime Minister in September 1958. Like Leon Uris's *Trinity*, this novel blends history and fiction; but it is more compressed and faster paced, and it is also curiously lighter and even joyful. Paton suffered through the events he writes of; but, in his novel, rampaging injustice never wholly obliterates the prospect of justice restored. And as justice requires sanity, so sanity needs humor since the absurdities of irrational prejudice are frequently comic—as witness the grossly obscene anonymous letters signed "Proud White Christian Woman" in this book.

Paton's superb opening scene matches the best moments of *Cry, the Beloved Country*. In it, a beautiful young Indian girl, Prem Bodasingh—the only child of wealthy parents through whose tragicomic forebodings we experience the scene—seeks arrest in a Durban public library reserved for whites. Other fine fictional moments include a dramatic scene during a Good Friday liturgy when an Afrikaner judge of the supreme court washes—and kisses—the feet of an old black woman who has nursed his children. But the best fictional invention in this novel is the character Van Onselen, a ranking civil servant in the Department of Justice whose confidential letters to his aunt keep us privy to the determination of the men in power to enforce their Christian National principles. He tells her, for example, that "any preaching of racial equality will in the future be regarded as an attempt to further the aims of Communism." Van Onselen looks forward to "a Golden Age" when under Dr. Hendrik's guidance each race will enjoy its "God-given identity" in total separation—a millennium he anticipates by 1976. (In that fateful year black schoolchildren in Soweto rebelled against the system of "Bantu Education" Dr. Verwoerd had introduced in 1953.)

Paton—born in 1903 and early schooled on Dickens and Hardy—employs a direct and forceful realism. J.M. Coetzee—born in 1940 into an Afrikaans-speaking family but later schooled on Joyce, Kafka, and Beckett (as well as Freud)—employs the subtle indirection of psychological allegory. Because of his great narrative skill and mastery of language, Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* is almost Orphic in its enticement to explore Acheron with him. He appears to take his title from C.P. Cavafy's poem "Expecting the Barbarians," and, as in that poem, the time and place are left to the imagination. His narrator is a self-indulgent patrician magistrate—*l'homme moyen sensuel*—in a small outpost of the Empire. He is unaware of any imminent threat from the barbarians until Colonel Joll of the Third Bureau arrives to prepare for their attack and interrogate suspects. Joll, a dandified sadist, is convinced that torture best serves truth: "First I get lies, you see—this is what happens—first lies, then pressure, then more lies, then more pressure, then the break, then more pressure, then the truth. That's how you get the truth."

At first inclined to stand aloof, the magistrate is drawn to interfere. He aids a

Challenges for Evangelizers



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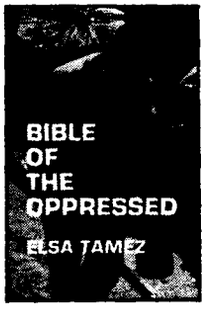

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tortured boy and takes in a barbarian girl crippled and nearly blinded by Joll's torturers in the presence of her father whom they killed. Vaguely uncertain of his motives, the magistrate begins a strange relationship with the girl that combines fatherly, erotic, and penitential impulses. (His first approach is a ritual washing and anointing of her crippled feet and ankles smashed by the torturers.) In time, he undertakes a dangerous journey to restore her to her people and he is tortured and imprisoned when he returns. He survives, and when Joll's forces abandon the place, he assumes the care of a remnant of unprotected townspeople facing barbarian vengeance.

Deriving from the character of his narrator who is so nearly the good man of classical antiquity, Coetzee's book has a curiously Roman—or pre-Christian—sensibility remote from South African reality. But in Paton's book one meets modern Christians of all sorts—some with the devouring propensities of coliseum lions. An elderly Hindu warns Prem Bodasingh: ". . . if you ever become a Christian, you must keep your eyes on Christ so that you will not get a chance to look at Christians."

Paton, who will turn eighty next January, has recoverd from a recent bout with illness and hopes for continued health to complete his trilogy. This first volume is more than a fine beginning. It is a tract for the times; for on February 27, 1982 the State Department lifted trade restrictions imposed on South Africa by President Carter; and on March 7, the *Chicago Tribune* noted that John Sears, who had managed President Reagan's campaign until William Casey took over, received his annual $500,000 as a registered Washington agent for South Africa—in terms of his contract—in quarterly sums of $125,000. There may be joy in every quarter because the land is beautiful.

Faith & the greased pole

OH WHAT A PARADISE IT SEEMS

John Cheever

Alfred A. Knopf, $10, 100 pp.

Margaret Wimsatt

THIS latest brief novel by John Cheever might make a good introduction to the long and unified body of his work. The essential Cheever themes are here: religion, sensuality, the Wordsworthian longing for innocence, the people, materially well-off but so often poor within, and the settings, with home base an easy commute from the city, but outfields as wide as the world.

There are several paradises implied in the title — the heavenly, in its old religious sense, the carnal, still with its mixture of bliss and despair, and the literally earthly. The framework of the plot concerns Lemuel Sears, his unspoiled milltown home named Janice after the first miller's first wife, Beasley's Pond nearby (a body of water so charming it might have inspired a nineteenth-century landscape painter) and his relationship to his adversaries. These evil forces (the Mafia? probably) have obtained a zoning variation to fill the pond with rubbish, thereby polluting nearby wetlands and poisoning the neighborhood water supply. An old story this, the battle of the small owner against the giant developer, of the exurbanite trying to save exurbia, and of all of us who try to protect this fragile planet. Lined up against Lemuel is an Italian "family," some of whose members invite governors to their weddings and dine at the White House, but whose local representative is an unsuccessful barber for whom the family assumes responsibility. Sammy is given the job of collecting the fees at the family project, filling Beasley's Pond. Also on the wrong side are most of the town's officials, venal politicians with old Wasp names. Lemuel's allies are a lawyer (murdered), an environmentalist (murdered), and a daffy young married woman from Hitching Post Lane named Betsy. Betsy at last saves the day by threatening to poison, with doctored bottles of teriyaki sauce, all the customers of the local supermarket. Lemuel funds a reclamation project, and at the end of the story is happily explaining entrophication and its reversal to interested visitors. "What a Paradise it seemed!"

This wealthy worthy Lemuel has the carnal itch of all Cheever heroes. An interspersed sub-plot relates his pursuit of and temporary liaison with Renée, a woman he picks up in a bank teller's queue. A man on the wrong side of middle age longs, we know, not only for the physical gratification but for the reassurance the company of an attractive woman can bring him, in bed and in public places. Cheever's men put up with uncommon humiliations to attain this. After Renée's departure, Lemuel has a brief homosexual fling with the doorman at her apartment house. The cleansing of the pond thereupon takes first place in the book, and sex is heard of no more.

This little book has its flaws. The Cheever tone can cloy, and his elegant vocabulary tire. Incidents and scenes one has met before recur. Others remain unexplained. Why, for instance, are there in *Paradise* two scenes of a man with a rifle kneeling in a pondside mint bed, with another man targeted in teh crosshairs of his sight? Finally, like its predecessor *Falconer*, the tale stops, with no true ending. "As I said in the beginning, this is just a story meant to be read in bed in an old house on a rainy night." This whimsy has little to do with the book.

Cheever is a master of incident; there is always enough happening in his stories and novels to keep our curiosity alive. But plot is not what attracts his readers. The role of religion in his characters' lives, faith held on to as the climber grasps the greased pole, challenges us all. His wit with the self-mocking smile he or his people sometimes display, the wide range of his references (mythology, history, geography, and certain processes of the contemporary world, in this case, computer containers) play their parts. His main gift underlies and overlies all these. It is love, compassion, *admiration* for God's world in all its complexity, and gratitude for the gift of life. Cheever does not need vast numbers of characters or statistics. One man, reflecting, can encompass the universe. He may live in a monastery or on a mountain top. He may even live in Westchester County.

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Faithful advocates of openness

CONCERN FOR THE CHURCH

Karl Rahner

Crossroad, $12.95, 191 pp.

A CHURCH TO BELIEVE IN

Avery Dulles

Crossroad, $12.95, 224 pp.

Bernard Cooke

THIS twentieth (and apparently final) volume in the series *Theological Investigations* is vintage Rahner. Profoundly traditional, working as a theologian within the Roman Catholic tradition to make reasonable the specific doctrines of that community, yet open to newness in the most radical fashion and trying to nudge his church towards the future — this is what Rahner has always been and what he gives voice to in this volume. It is appropriately entitled *Concern for the Church*; loyal but honest concern for the church of Christ and within it for the Roman Catholic communion underlies everything this book says.

Many a progressive Catholic will find the early portions of the book hard going — not because of the dense style that characterizes Rahner's work, but because of the painfully short steps he suggests as implementation of Vatican II. Instead of urging imaginative innovations by Catholic leadership, instead of saying that lay men and women may well have to take upon themselves responsibility for moving the church into the future, Rahner very carefully argues that it is *possible* for Rome to make the adjustments forecast at Vatican II, that it is not against the intrinsic God-given structures of the Roman Catholic church for the papacy to share not only consultation but policy-making with non-clerics, that the perennial elements of Roman Catholicism can endure (though perhaps pruned) into a new future.

Even when he discusses ecumenical possibilities, Rahner takes this very cautious line. He describes his dream of some future meeting of the pope with other world religious leaders in order to move towards some genuine unity; and

Alfred Priori

The Number of Angels That Can Dance on a Pin

I HAVE not as yet read Mortimer J. Adler's *The Angels and Us* (Macmillan, 1982). In that book, according to an advertisement in *The New York Times Book Review* (April 4, 1982), Adler answers the age-old question: "How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?"

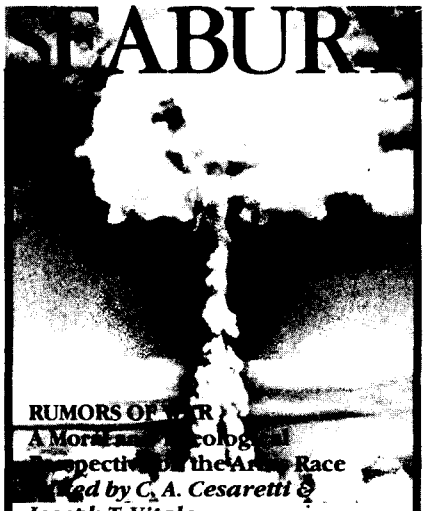
My own answer, derived independently — and by the use of impeccable mathematical reasoning — is given below:

The number of angels that can dance on a pin,
Equals one-half the price of a gallon of gin,
Times the number of inches from here to the door,
Plus 0.2 of the width, times the length of the floor.

Divide all this by π, and see if it checks,
With the $\sqrt{y}$ times $3e^{x}$
Then take logs of both sides, and sum over i,
That will equal the weight of a large pumpkin pie.

Add the width of a rhombus to the height of a square,
Plus three times the speed of a slow grizzly bear,
Multiply that result by two tons of green hay,
This will equal the distance from here to Bombay.

That's the number we seek, and please do not grin,
It's the number of angels that can dance on a pin.
Scoff if you will, with your nose out of joint,
But this answer's correct to the *n*th decimal point.



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the pope makes some *very* circumscribed (though for the Vatican very daring!) suggestions about modifying the outlook and practice of Roman Catholicism vis à vis papal primacy. However, after describing this dream, Rahner gives us a clue to his whole approach: he tells us that a friend to whom he related this dream remarked that such lengthy discussion as the dream contained and such slow-moving and plodding approach to a goal that seems evident, is a typical dream for a theologian — to which Rahner replies that there may be more future in dreaming realistically than in unrealistic phantasy.

Whether or not one agrees with this slow-paced "dreaming" — and I think many of us wonder if there is time for such high level foot-dragging in ecclesiastical officialdom — Rahner's approach performs a critically necessary task. Many Catholics, both those in positions of power and a large percentage of "ordinary" Catholics, still think that any real change in church structures is ruled out in advance because of the way in which God has structured the church. For such people it must be pointed out that the "divinely instituted" aspects of the church can endure and even be strengthened in the midst of considerable alteration of church structures. Much of the resistance to change in the church does come from real fear that the substance of Christianity (or at least of Catholicism) will be lost. Such fear must be dispelled gently by theological argumentation that flows from obvious, genuine concern for the church. Not all theologians are capable of the patient, cautious explanation that this situation demands. Rahner is.

But there is the other side of the book: the radical side. This does not involve suggestions of revolutionary revision. Rather, it lies in Rahner's treatment of Christian spirituality and in his final chapter on God. What comes through loud and clear in this portion of the book is that any Christian movement into the future must be *a movement towards God* that is as completely open as possible. Those familiar with Rahner's thought will recognize his basic anthropological insight: humans are a transcendental relationship to the divine. But in this book the insight is expressed in terms of the truly mystical dimension that will (in Rahner's view) mark Christian faith and prayer in future, a mysticism that will not be the relatively individualistic mysticism of the past, but a shared, truly common religious experience — an intensely personal faith lived in communion with others.

What such a radical response to God's Spirit might mean for the church as an institution, Rahner does not say. But he leaves no doubt that Christian discipleship demands from all in the church, powerful and powerless, a willingness to follow God into a humanly uncertain but divinely assured future.

Though the same concern for the church is evident, *A Church to Believe In*, Avery Dulles's latest book, is quite a different kind of volume. A reworking of essays that had been published on various occasions over the past decade, it reflects the specific concerns and involvements of the author — and in so doing, reflects many of the concerns of the American Catholic theological community.

One of these concerns, the nature of magisterial teaching in the church, is handled in Dulles's discussion of papal infallibility and of the relation between the official (episcopal and papal) *magisterium* and the specialized research and teaching function of professional theologians. On both topics Dulles is painstakingly careful in his argumentation; yet he rejects the naive absolutism that sees practically no limits to official teaching authority; and he moves instead towards a more nuanced and open understanding of both "infallibility" and "*magisterium*." In the end, Dulles argues for a dialectic between official and scholarly teachers in the church, with distinctive and irreplaceable roles for each group.

Throughout his reflections, Dulles is obviously motivated by ecumenical con-

Growing Social Presence

. . . There are intellectual roots for this growth of Catholic social presence: the tradition expressed in the great papal social encyclicals, the "opening" of the church to the world formally signaled at the Second Vatican Council. But the most important roots are existential: at a time when so many ideological forces for or against change are essentially the possession of the managers and commissars, the bureaucrats and oligarchs, the church retains, and in many cases has extended, its presence among ordinary people.

If the church protests the government's abandonment of the South Bronx, it is not because church leaders are Keynesians but because the church is *in* the South Bronx. Catholics do not find themselves defending the rights of the poor in Latin America because they are Marxists; they have been attracted to Marxism because they were caught up in class struggles. . . .

— Editorial in *Commonweal*, May 22, 1981

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cerns. One chapter in particular, which deals with the notion of *ius divinum*, deserves careful study by anyone interested in or actively working towards Christian reunion. While "papal infallibility" is a more evident stumbling-block to reunion, the manner in which different Christian groups understand and utilize the notion of "divine institution" underlies their whole attitude vis à vis retention or change of church structures.

Dulles comes to much the same conclusion as Rahner about the extent to which flexibility and innovation can respect retention of essentials in Roman Catholic belief and life, but his approach is different. After a brief historical review of the question, particularly the Reformation and post-Reformation discussions, Dulles examines some of the current theological explanations of Catholic and Lutheran scholars, and then goes on to his own suggestions. Essentially, his own position is one of distinguishing between four spheres of institutional structure, seeing those closer to the center (the basic sacramental aspects of Christian life) as irrevocable and those further from the center as open to more drastic change. As a basic criterion for practical judgment about the retention, revision, or abandonment of any ecclesiastical structures, Dulles suggests obedience to God's present will for the church.

Both Rahner and Dulles are careful theological craftsmen, faithfully guided by Christian tradition; and for that reason their advocacy of greater openness to structural changes in the church deserves a careful hearing.

Kennedy (cont.)

(Continued from page 306)

nedy's aura "imprisoned" his successors in the White House as well as his younger brothers, Robert and Edward. He writes: "Charisma . . . is not transferable—even to members of the 'graced' leader's own family. But later presidents would be measured by the expectations Kennedy raised. He did not so much elevate the office as cripple those who held it after him. His legend has haunted them; his light has cast them in shadow."

I find this wholly unconvincing with regard to Presidents Johnson and Nixon. If Johnson had inherited the presidency and Vietnam from some other Democratic president with a set of advisers different from Kennedy's "best and brightest," he would still have done what he did. Johnson had his own convictions and his own hang-ups and he would have acted upon them if Kennedy had never lived. The same can be said of Nixon and his criminal tendencies. It is only verbal fog to argue that either of them as president was "imprisoned" by the Kennedy legend.

With regard to JFK's own brothers, Wills has a valid point. His brother's assassination had a traumatic effect on Robert Kennedy. As for Edward, whom Wills consistently patronizes, there is poignant truth in his observation:

"John, campaigning, had Robert and

(Continued on page 318)

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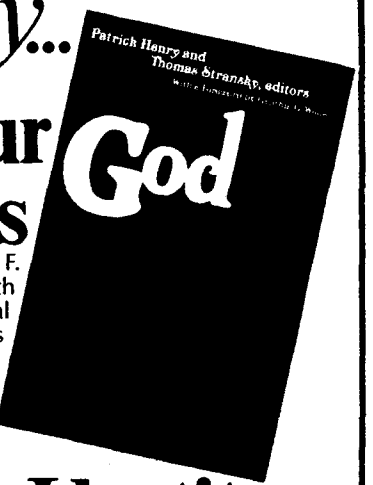

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A MADDER TEA PARTY

ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM

CHARLES A. BRADY

A CLOCK is striking six as our conversation-piece begins. Virginia Woolf, Lewis Carroll and James Joyce are at table more or less in the postures Sir John Tenniel caught Alice, the March Hare, and the Mad Hatter in when he drew them for Alice in Wonderland's *Mad Tea Party. What seems to be the traditional Dormouse slumbers between the Hare and Hatter. The creature's true identity will emerge as the party unfolds.*

VIRGINIA WOOLF: I don't know why *we* should have been elected to play the guests at this mad tea party. I went to a child's party once dressed as a Mad Hatter. But that was a long time ago.

JAMES JOYCE. We're certainly all mad enough to qualify.

LEWIS CARROLL. *I'm* not mad. Not certifiably so, anyway.

JAMES JOYCE. As an Englishman, you are mad by definition. Surely you remember the place in "Hamlet" where Claudius sent the Danish Prince to England "because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, 'tis no great matter . . . there the men are as mad as he." I also offer your own Cheshire Cat as witness.

VIRGINIA WOOLF (*quoting with a smile*). "We're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad." Well, I for one won't deny it. I once spoke, in my "Common Reader," of those "comfortably padded lunatic asylums which are known, euphemistically, as the stately homes of England." I spoke from experience, you see—I was born in one. But, Mr. Joyce, I don't suppose you wish to argue that Ireland is any saner than England.

JAMES JOYCE. Hardly—and Ulster is maddest of all. Except, of course, for my American commentators.

LEWIS CARROLL. It occurs to me that there may be a more flattering reason for the three of us being here.

JAMES JOYCE. What is that?

LEWIS CARROLL. Time, Mr. Joyce. Anno Domini. March is the March Hare's month. I turned 150 on January 27th of this year. Mrs. Woolf achieved the hundred mark two days before that. You yourself became a centenarian on February 2nd. We did what my Hatter said no one should set out to do. We beat time. It may be always six o'clock at my tea party. But in the world of letters, it's always Joyce-time now when it isn't Woolf-time.

JAMES JOYCE. I heard they still keep the clock five minutes fast at Davy Byrne's. There's wonderland for ye.

VIRGINIA WOOLF. Joyce-time when it isn't Carroll-time. You began it all, you know, Mr. Carroll. Your Alice is world literature's most radiant manifestation of Goethe's "eternal womanly." If I hadn't other good reasons for my feminine partisanship, your Alice alone would have made me proud to be a woman—she is so resolute, so practical, so beautifully bred.

JAMES JOYCE. "*Das Ewig-Weibliche/Zieht uns hinan: the eternal in woman draws us on*"—"some meinherr from Almany" said that, to quote myself. Yes, that was what I was after with my Molly Bloom. But you are right, Carroll me boyo. As a compatriot of mine once put it, we are "the movers and shakers/Of the world forever, it seems." I have helped forge "the uncreated conscience of my race." I have helped build Dublin as much as any old Viking founder. And, by God, Ireland knows it at last! You saw how they celebrated my birthday this time?

LEWIS CARROLL. I did indeed. I thought the nicest touch of all was opening that new hostelry named Blooms. Maybe it will be possible to get good food in Dublin at last.

JAMES JOYCE. Oh, breakfast was always capital in Ireland—and even in my day you could find a French restaurant here and there. I grant you, though, the Irish are every bit as miserable cooks as the English. But if you want to drink in a civilized way, I would suggest going back to Davy Byrne's, or else to The Bailey which has preserved the Blooms's green front door from 7 Eccles Street. I read in the *Irish Times* that this new Blooms you speak of is serving an abomination called a "Molly Bloom cocktail." Orange juice and Irish Mist, God save the mark! We had Pink Ladies and Orange Blossoms in my day, true enough—but providence spared us that ultimate indignity.

VIRGINIA WOOLF. I believe February 2nd was the same day Cairo published *Ulysses* in Arabic. What did you think of that, Mr. Joyce?

JAMES JOYCE. It was tit for tat, Mrs. Woolf. Didn't I put Sinbad in Dublin? The true test will come when they try *Finnegan* in Arabic. But, speaking of *Ulysses*, I wonder what they will make of my Bloom in the literary coffeehouses of the Middle East. I can see one of my shorter sentences coming true all over again: "When in doubt persecute Bloom." Now that's a nightmare history hasn't yet awakened from—that and Ulster.

VIRGINIA WOOLF. Bloom is your masterpiece, Mr. Joyce: modern letters' first and greatest Jewish *kleiner Mann*. I said that to my husband, Leonard—and it is true.

JAMES JOYCE (*grumbling a little*). Too bad you didn't say in public instead of calling me "a queasy undergraduate scratching his pimples." Why, that was

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CHARLES A BRADY, *book columnist and literary caricaturist for the* Buffalo Evening News *and author of numerous books including* A Catholic Reader, Church Mouse, *and* St. Thomas, *taught English for many yers at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York.*

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as bad as Trinity's Great Cham, Dr. Mahaffey, saying that I was no more than a corner boy spitting into the Liffey. Sure, and if I did spit into Ana Livia Plurabelle, it helped improve the flavor of the malt in the Guinness Works. It helped make my day an Irish addendum to Guinnessis. (*He turns to Carroll*) My best pun, I think. I took over that trick of portmanteau word from you, friend Carroll. Accept my belated thanks.

LEWIS CARROLL (*pleased, raising his teacup*). Your health, James!

JAMES JOYCE (reciprocating, then speaking in a startled voice). *Slainte!* Why, it isn't tea at all, at all! It's burnished Jameson's! Or Bushmill's—I was never enough of a nationalist to tell a northern "glance of Irish frisky" from a southern. Are you drinking *poteen* yourself?

LEWIS CARROLL. No. A white vin d'Alsace. A Gewurztraminer from les caves Klug at Bennwihr, Haut-Rhin. You may remember that one of my pleasanter functions as an Oxford don was to lay down the wines for the senior common room of my college. It is, by the way, one of the greatest compensations of our present laureate state that we are able to drink what we wish—at will.

VIRGINIA WOOLF. As you say, my dear Mr. Carroll, one of the pleasanter functions indeed. You have saved your March Hare's face after all these years. You will remember that he said to Alice, "Have some wine," and, when she replied, "I don't see any wine," he answered: "There isn't any." I wondered why my tea tasted so much like good port—my father taught me to appreciate good port, you know. Wait till they hear of this in Bloomsbury!

JAMES JOYCE (*with a guffaw*). Bloomsbury—Bloom's city! Yes, you built a Bloomsbury, too. A different Bloomsbury—one with five sexes, not just three. And all interchangeable!

VIRGINIA WOOLF (glaring). Mr. Joyce, I will thank you to—

LEWIS CARROLL (*interposing to redeem the situation*).—to propose a toast.

JAMES JOYCE (*accepting the pacific gambit*). To our readers! May they find the quarks they search for—and if they come upon that even rarer entity, a Snark, may he not turn out a Boojum!

VIRGINIA WOOLF (*in a puzzled voice*). Why ever not? The allusion escapes me.

JAMES JOYCE. Let the Dormouse answer that. He's a hibernating rodent. But the hounds of spring are on winter's traces, *Èveille-toi, ma dormeuse!* Actually, of course, the correct French for dormouse is *loir*, masculine.

GROUNDHOG (*struggling sleepily to its feet*). Excuse me, but I am not a dormouse, I am an American cousin, a groundhog, to be exact, also known as a woodchuck, the latter from Algonquian *wejack*, Mr. Joyce—you have the Algonquian for thunder in your *Finnegan*, you know—genus Marmota monax, species Americana.

VIRGINIA WOOLF (*murmuring*). How very curious!

JAMES JOYCE. I suppose that makes you a stand-in for my American commentators.

GROUNDHOG. A sleep-in, rather. Are you surprised? You really shouldn't be. A man with your peculiar passion for pedantic parallels must know that your birthdate, February 2nd, is Groundhog Day in the States. As for your question, Mrs. Woolf, the answer may be found in the final stanza of "The Hunting of the Snark" where the unfortunate hunter discovers that his would-be prey is a Boojum, after all, and so—annihilation! The "annihilisation of the etym," as it were, as you once called it, Mr. Joyce. Perpend now! (*The Groundhog recites, beating time with one paw*)

In the midst of the word he was trying to say,
In the midst of his laughter and glee,
He had softly and suddenly vanished away –
For the snark WAS a Boojum, you see.

Yes E=mc^2, equals kaboom, equals poof, equals—nothing. All gone. No Alice, no Mrs. Dalloway, no Shem and Shaun. Death banes and the quick quoke . . . A Gull. Gulls. Far calls. Coming, far! End here. Us then. Finn, again. Take Bussoftlhee, mememormee! Till thousandsthee. Lps. The keys to. Given! A way a lone a last a loved a long the . . . In again, out again, gone again. Take Bussoftlhee, mememor- (*back to sleep*)

VIRGINIA WOOLF. Curiouser and curiouser!

The clock strikes six again as Mrs. Woolf pours once more from the mad teapot on the table and the conversation goes on forever in the endless, amaranthine, golden afternoon.

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(Continued from page 315)

Edward to work for him. Robert had Edward to advise and be his surrogate. Edward has no one but ghosts at his side, and they count more against than for him, eclipse him with bright images from the past. Where they were praised too fulsomely, he is bound to be judged too harshly. He inherits the illusions of his brothers' followers with the accumulated venoms of their foes; and both tend to disinherit him."

The John Kennedy portrayed in this book is the Kennedy of the Green Berets and Vietnam and the Bay of Pigs (to which Wills devotes inordinate space). Seeing the Bay of Pigs as "the very definition of the New Frontier," he uses it to discredit Kennedy's whole administration. Yet he never addresses, much less answers, the question of why Kennedy did not go plunging ahead with full air and ground support for the Cuban exiles as their invasion faltered. He seems not to recognize the cool, cautious, skeptical side of Kennedy's nature and how much it controlled his actual decisions as distinguished from the "macho" tough-guy image he projected.

So intent is Wills on discrediting Kennedy that he either ignores or barely adverts to the American University speech, the nuclear test ban treaty, and the first sale of grain to the Soviet Union—all of which another author could use to depict Kennedy as the father of *détente*—and likewise he scants the Alliance for Progress, the Kennedy interest in Africa, and ridicules the Peace Corps.

It is equally significant that Wills omits any mention of Kennedy's 1963 message to Congress calling for the comprehensive civil rights law that was enacted the following year. That law is one of the great achievements of liberal politics in America. But as a radical, Wills is obsessed with denigrating liberalism and politics alike. He ends his book with a tasteless and ill-founded juxtaposition of Martin Luther King's pacifism and Kennedy's politics. King's doctrine of nonviolence and his demonstrations and marches were unquestionably important in shaping the civil rights revolution, but he would not have achieved very much if liberal politicians like Kennedy and Johnson and conservatives like Everett Dirksen had not responded to his trumpet call with a lot of hard, detailed, legislative work.

Because Wills has no belief in politics as it is practiced on the American scene, his meditations on power usually miss the point. Since all three Kennedy brothers have been politicians, he fails as well to understand them.

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Correspondence

(Continued from page 290)

tion is best done, I believe, by reference to Pius XII's words on world government.

JOHN DOEBELE

Against the freeze

Newport, R.I.

To the Editors: As a Catholic who is cooperating in the planning and execution of the U.S. nuclear deterrence strategy I am compelled to respond to Bishop Roger Mahony's pastoral letter [Mar. 12]. As this issue does not lend itself to a decision based upon theological faith, and the fact that I find the bishop's arguments supported by error, I remain morally convinced that the current U.S. nuclear policy of strategic deterrence is morally, diplomatically, and militarily justifiable. I am also firmly convinced that the New Abolitionist Covenant calling for a nuclear weapons freeze endangers world peace and, in fact, makes it more likely that in the event of war nuclear weapons will be used indiscriminately by both sides against cities and large segments of civilian populations.

The bishop is in error when he states that the current U.S. policy is designed for counterforce and first-strike strategy rather than deterrence. This statement alone reveals that Bishop Mahony is totally misinformed about the complex issues involved in nuclear disarmament. The opposite of counterforce is countervalue or city bombing. Also, contrary to the bishop's statement, advances in new weapons have led in the past to significant arms control measures, e.g., the ABM Treaty (President Reagan's current proposal for a "zero option" in Europe has again brought the Soviets to the negotiations table because of a new weapons capability in the possession of NATO: Pershing II and the cruise missile).

Rather than detail the many other areas which contain erroneous information (plans for indiscriminate bombing of civilian populations, the fallacy of counting warheads to prove our destructive power, and abandonment of deterrence and arms control, ignoring the need for computerized accuracy to ensure deterrence, that we were "systematically misled" concerning the missile gap of the '60s, that we are in a "war economy," the "guns *or* butter" argument, that we are trying to achieve military superiority), let me address the essential area of rational disagreement.

A nuclear freeze at the current level is not a matter of giving up military superiority. If our strategic nuclear force

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is vulnerable to a Soviet first strike (and that is the only way the strategic exchange can start), then our current strategic nuclear force (not just numbers) cannot act as a deterrent because, given their present program of strategic nuclear force modernization (payloads, accuracy, survivability), the Soviets can become convinced that they can win a nuclear war. Also, if that war does take place at our current level of capability then we will most likely be driven to carry out a launch-on-warning strategy which is exactly what those in the new peace movement want to prevent. Finally, a freeze at the current level would provide no incentive for the Soviets to negotiate on nuclear arms reductions.

Let me close with a challenge to the New Abolitionist Covenant:

- Accept the logic of your conclusions and support an increased conventional arms buildup especially in NATO. If the Catholic church is not a pacifist church, and yet wants to deter war, it must accept the responsibility, and the costs and risks, of replacing our reliance on nuclear deterrence wherever possible with conventional weapons. The case in NATO is the best example. Also, the recent proposal to develop a non-nuclear ballistic missile defense system, both in the atmosphere and in space, should be given serious consideration.
- Stop "demonizing" those in your government and American industry who are sincerely working for nuclear arms control and reduction.
- Find a way to carry the peace movement to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In my opinion, the Catholic church is the only institution capable of doing this.

Finally, Bishop Mahony need not apologize for entering this debate. As in the issue of abortion, the nuclear arms race is obviously a moral issue of the highest order. It is not just a matter of faith, however, and those proposing new solutions which could lead to disaster as well as success are obliged to become informed on the issues and think through the logic of their conclusions. Although I agree with Bishop Mahony's goal of peace, his arguments on how to achieve that goal are neither reasonably convincing nor morally persuasive.

ROBERT M. BOWE

Away from 'religion'

Torrington, Conn.

To the Editors: According to your apparently-male editorialist, quoting in the April 23 issue, Elizabeth Cady Stanton said, "All religious structures posit man as the living godhead with woman as his obedient servant. It will never be otherwise. We must turn away from religion altogether."

I wouldn't mind if you put "religion" in quotes, perhaps; but she was right.

A.B. SMITH

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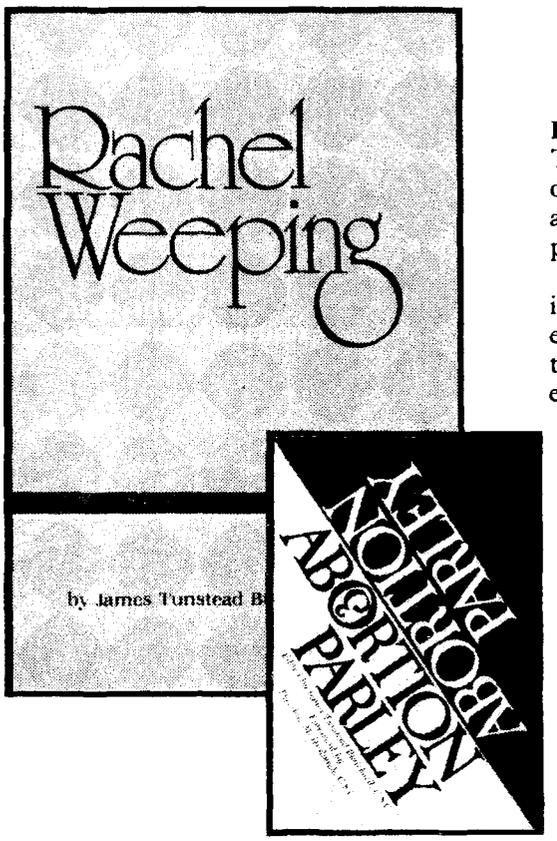

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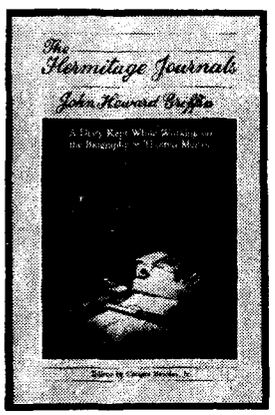

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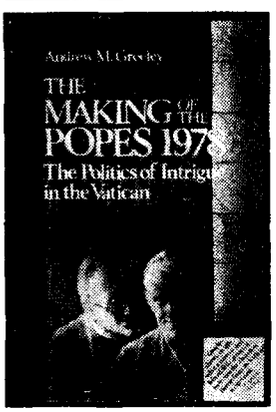

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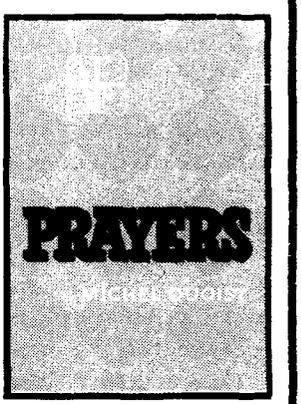

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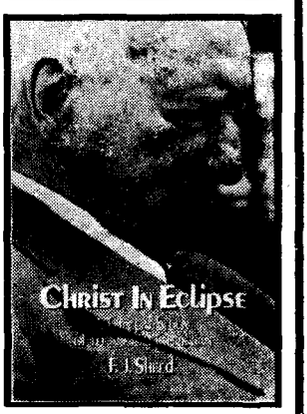

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